Koviloor Acadamy

SOME LEGENDS OF GREECE AND ROME.

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Prepared for Pupils' Use
by the EDITOR.

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Note.—For the meanings of words which are not found in the Notes at the end of the book, the pupil should refer to the **"A.L." Scholar's English Dictionary**, 100 pp., net 2*d.* (Cloth-lined Covers, net 3*d.*), which contains nearly 14,000 words.

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SOME LEGENDS OF GREECE AND ROME.

I.—A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE ANCIENT GREEKS AND ROMANS.

BEFORE you can understand some of the charming tales related by the old Greek and Roman poets (several of which are told in this little book), you must know something about the people themselves, and the ideas they had respecting their gods and goddesses and the other fabulous[1] beings whom they believed in.

And first you may wonder why it is thought desirable that you should know something about the fables which those great and intelligent peoples, the Greeks and Romans, used to accept as true, and which formed part of their religious beliefs. If you could read books written in Greek and Latin you would learn these things at first hand,[2] but at the present day, comparatively few people acquire sufficient Latin to be able to read the language easily, and fewer still know Greek.

Now those who read the Daily Papers, the Magazines, or the general Literature[3] of our country, cannot understand parts of what they read unless they know something of what the Greeks and Romans held about their gods and goddesses. The knowledge of these things is called Myth-ol'-o-gy,* and this word means that branch of learning which deals with the stories called myths[4] and fables that those ancient people believed in.

* Pronounce *mĭth-ol'-o-jĭ*—*ĭ* as in "pin" (not *ī* as in "pine"); *o* as in "not."

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Some of these stories are very beautiful indeed, for wise men invented these fables as parables,[1] in order to keep up the remembrance of certain great truths amongst their fellow countrymen. But, in time, some of the myths began to be looked upon as true histories; people forgot the lessons the myths were intended to teach, and in late years, many corrupt additions,[2] having no meaning in them, or worse than none, were made to the tales.

For instance, Ho′-mer,[3] a great Greek poet, who lived probably a thousand years before Christ, says, very beautifully, of the Greek gods, that they ate and drank food that kept them from ever dying. Some of the later poets added to this idea, and said that their food was am-bro′-si-a*[4] and their drink nec′-tar.†[5] In this, and in many other ways, the Greek fables became so absurd, and sometimes even wicked, that men felt they could not be believed in, and that such a religion ought not to be accepted.

The number of gods that the Greeks and Romans worshipped was very great, but the religion which taught them about these gods and goddesses has quite died out, and there is not now, in any part of the world, a single person who worships after the manner of the old Greeks and Romans.

You know that Greece is a small, and, at the present time, a not very important country in the South of Europe; but ages ago, when the few people who lived in the rest of of Europe were still little better than savages, the Greeks were a very great people indeed. There were clever poets amongst them; they had many good laws; they were brave fighters, who overcame their enemies, chief among whom were the Persians;[6] they grew rich by trading, and established colonies[7] on almost all the shores of the Mediterranean

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* Pronounce *am-brō′-zī-a*—*a* as in "man"; *ō* as in "no"; *ī* as in "pin."

† ,, *nek′-tar*—*e* as in "neck"; *a* as in "sofa."

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Sea. But in course of time these brave people, who had risen to very great power and influence, were themselves subdued by the Romans, and gradually, from being the greatest nation in the world, they sank into their present state of comparative insignificance.

In early days, long before the Christian era (that is, before the birth of Christ), Greece was divided into two great states, one called At′-ti-ca,[1] and the other Spar′-ta.[2] The Spartans were great soldiers, and perhaps the bravest men that ever lived. They were of dauntless courage, for every boy, from early childhood, was trained with the most rigid discipline, to be fearless in danger, to fight bravely in battle, and to bear hardships without a murmur.

The men of Athens were also brave men, but they held that fighting was not the whole end and aim of life. They cultivated their intellects, so that we find amongst them some of the greatest writers and the cleverest artists (especially sculptors), that the world has seen.

The Romans were another great conquering nation, who also lived in the South of Europe, in that part now called Italy. They originated many years before the birth of Christ, their ancestors being a few shepherds who settled in a little hamlet on the banks of the river Ti′-ber. They often had to fight very hard to protect themselves from the savage nations who lived in their neighbourhood, and who used often to attack them, but these Romans were brave warriors and were generally victorious. The little hamlet grew, in the course of years, into a large town, and in time became the great and famous city of Rome. Gradually these people and their descendants conquered the whole country round their little settlement, and extended their conquests until, at last, all Italy was under their rule.

Nor did the conquests of the Romans end here. They overcame the Greeks; they made settlements in other parts

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of the Mediterranean; they overran Spain; they extended their power over Gaul (now France); and under one of their great leaders, Julius Cæsar, they twice successfully invaded Britain about the middle of the first century B.C. About 100 years later, they came again, conquered our country, and remained masters of it for nearly 400 years.

For a long time the Romans had no king, but were ruled by a *Senate*, which was really a kind of Parliament, and by Magistrates chosen every year. In time they decided to have an Emperor, and their first Emperor was Au-gus'-tus,[1] one of the best and wisest, most just and powerful rulers the world has ever known. During his rule the Romans were at peace with all the world, and they had now time to cultivate the Arts,[2] and to study Literature and Sculpture. When people are busy fighting against enemies, or conquering other nations, they have no time to think about such things.

Though the Romans were masters of all the world, as then known, they were not too proud to learn useful lessons from the people whom they conquered. Some of the half-savage nations who came under their control knew many things which the Romans were ignorant of, and they not only adopted these, but improved upon them. But they learnt most from the Greeks, especially in Art and Poetry, and they endeavoured, as far as possible, to follow the fine models which they found amongst that intelligent and cultured people.

We have already said that the Greeks and Romans worshipped many gods. Their religion taught them that the abode of the gods was on the summit of *O-lym'-pus*, a mountain in the north-east of Greece, and nearly ten thousand feet high. A gate of clouds, kept by the goddesses named the *Seasons*,[3] used to be opened to permit these deities[4] to come down to the earth, and to receive them back again

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when they returned. The poet Keats[1] thus speaks of them:—

"An ethereal band
Are visible above: the Seasons four,—
Green-kirtled Spring, flush Summer, golden store
In Autumn's sickle, Winter frosty hoar."

Each of the gods had a separate dwelling. The chief of the gods, and the ruler of them all, was *Zeus*;* this was the name by which he was known to the Greeks, but he was called *Ju'-pi-ter*,[2] or *Jove*, by the Romans. Though he is named the Father of gods and of men, he himself had a beginning, for his father was *Sat'-urn*,[3] or, as he is sometimes called *Kron'-os*,[4] and his mother *Rhe'-a*. Now Saturn and Rhea were of the race of the *Ti'-tans*,[5] who were the children of Earth and Heaven; they sprang from *Cha'-os*.[6]†

Of Jupiter, Homer,[7] the great Greek poet, says—

"He, whose all-conscious eyes the world behold,
The eternal Thunderer[8] sat, enthroned in gold,
High heaven the footstool of his feet he makes,
And wide beneath him all Olympus shakes."

"He spoke, and awful bends his sable[9] brows,
Shakes his ambrosial curls,[10] and gives the nod,
The stamp of fate, and sanction of the god:
High heaven with trembling the dread signal took,
And all Olympus to the centre shook."

He'-ra (or *Ju'-no*, as she was called by the Romans), was the wife of Jupiter and queen of the gods; *I'-ris*, the goddess of the rainbow, was her attendant and messenger; and the peacock was her favourite bird. A great Latin poet[11] thus speaks of *Iris*:—

"Like fiery clouds, that flush with ruddy glare,
Or Iris gliding through the purple air;
When loosely girt her dazzling mantle flows,
And, 'gainst the sun, in arching colours glows."

* Pronounce *zūs*—ū as in "use." Sometimes in two syllables, *zē-ūs*—ē as in "me"; ū as in "us," but one syllable is the more usual. † Pronounce *kā'-os*—ā as in "cane"; ŏ as in "loss."

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It is not difficult to see why the Greeks had so many gods and goddesses. They felt that one of their chief gods must be a god of strength, and to represent that character they invented another god whom they called *A′-res*,[1] better known under his Roman name of *Mars*; he was the son of Jupiter and Juno, and was the god of War.

They felt, too, that one great deity must have the quality of beauty, and so they imagined the goddess *Aph-ro-di′-te*,*[2] or, as the Romans called her, *Ve′-nus*, the goddess of Love and Beauty; she was the daughter of Jupiter, and one of the myths says she sprang from the foam of the sea.

"Look, look, why shine
Those floating bubbles with such light divine?
They break, and from their mist a lily form
Rises from out the wave, in beauty warm.
The wave is by the blue-veined feet scarce press'd,
Her silky ringlets float about her breast,
Veiling its fairy loveliness; while her eye
Is soft and deep as the blue heaven is high.
The Beautiful is born; and sea and earth
May well revere the hour of that mysterious birth."[3]

Then, again, one of their gods must be able to foretell things which were going to happen, and so they thought of *Phœ′-bus A-pol′-lo*,†[4] the god of the Sun, and his sister *Di-an′-a*,‡[5] the goddess of the Moon and the Chase, who had knowledge of all things past, present, and future. Apollo was the most beautiful among all the gods, and medicine, music, poetry, and all the fine arts were under his care. Pike,[6] the American poet, thus speaks of him:—

"Bright-hair'd Apollo!—thou who ever art
A blessing to the world—whose mighty heart

* Pronounce *af-rō-dī′-tē—a* as in "map"; *ō* as in "no"; *ī* as in "dine"; *ē* as in "me."
† " *fē′-bus a-pol′-lō—ē* as in "feel"; *u* as in "but"; *a* as in "man"; *o* as in "pot"; *ō* as in "no."
‡ " *di-an′-a—ī* as in "dive"; *a* as in "an"; *a* as in "machine." Sometimes *di-ā′-na—ā* as in "day," or *dē-ā′-na—ē* as in "me"; *ā* as in "far."

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For ever pours out love, and light, and life;
Thou, at whose glance, all things of earth are rife
With happiness; to whom, in early spring,
Bright flowers raise up their heads, where'er they cling
On the steep mountain side, or in the vale
Are nestled calmly. Thou at whom the pale
And weary earth looks up, when winter flees,
With patient gaze: thou for whom wind-stripped trees
Put on fresh leaves, and drink deep of the light
That glitters in thine eye: thou in whose bright
And hottest rays the eagle fills his eye
With quenchless fire, and far, far up on high
Screams out his joy to thee, by all the names
That thou dost bear—if thou dost follow
The fleeing night, oh, hear
Our hymn to thee, and willingly draw near!"

The great English poet, Ben Jonson,[1] in his "Hymn to Diana," thus speaks of the goddess who was mistress of the brute creation, and the guardian of civil right. The cypress tree was sacred to her, and her favourites were the dog, the goat, the bear, the boar, and the deer.

"Queen and Huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair,[2]
State in wonted manner keep:
Hes'-per-us[3] entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright.

"Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;
Cyn'-thi-a's[4] shining orb[5] was made
Heaven to clear when day did close:
Bless us then with wishèd[6] sight,
Goddess excellently bright.

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"Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
And thy crystal-shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short soever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night,
Goddess excellently bright."

Then there was *Ath-e'-ne,*[*1] the goddess of Wisdom, *Po-sei'-don*† or *Nep'-tune*, the god of the Sea, and *Plu'-to*, who ruled in the realms of the dead. There was *Cu'-pid*, the god of Love, whose Greek name was *E'-ros*;‡ he was the son of Venus and was armed with a bow and arrows, with which he shot darts of desire into the bosoms of gods and men.

Mer'-cu-ry, whom the Greeks called *Her'-mes*, was another son of Jupiter; he presided over Commerce, and also over Wrestling and Athletic Games, as well as almost all exercises requiring skill and dexterity. He was the messenger of Jupiter, and wore a wingèd cap and wingèd shoes. He carried in his hand a magic wand which had the power of reconciling all things that were at enmity. This wand was given to Mercury by Apollo, and the god, being anxious to test it, thrust it between two quarrelling snakes, which at once wound themselves round it. On the top of the rod were two little wings. Hence the complete rod, which is called a *ca-du'-ce-us*,§[2] is always represented with two serpents twined round it. He is said to have invented the lyre[3] by taking a tortoise shell, making holes on the opposite edges of it, and joining these holes with cords or strings, of which there were nine.

Amongst the goddesses were the nine *Mu'-ses*, who were daughters of Jupiter; they presided over Song and

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* Pronounce *ath-ē'-nē*—*a* as in "mat"; *ē* as in "me."
† " *pō-sī'-don*—*ō* as in "no"; *i* as in "side"; *o* as in "don."
‡ " *ē'-ros*—*ē* as in "me"; *o* as in "loss." Not *ēr'-ōs*.
§ " *ka-dū'-sē-us*—*a* as in "mat"; *ū* as in "duty"; *ē* as in "see": *u* as in "us."

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Memory. Three other goddesses were the *Gra'-ces*, who presided over the Banquet, the Dance, and all pleasurable enjoyments of the home. Edmund Spenser,[1] in "The Faërie Queene," thus speaks of the work of the Graces:—

"These three on men all gracious gifts bestow,
Which deck the body or adorn the mind,
To make them lovely or well-favoured show;
As comely carriage, entertainment kind,
Sweet semblance,[2] friendly offices that bind,
And all the complements of courtesy;
They teach us how to each degree and kind
We should ourselves demean,[3] to low, to high,
To friends, to foes; which skill[4] men call Civility."

Amongst the Roman deities were *Bel-lo'-na*,* the goddess of War, and *Pa'-les*, the goddess in whose care were the Cattle and Pasture-Lands. *Po-mo'-na* had the Gardens and all kinds of Fruit trees under her charge, *Flo'-ra* was the goddess of Flowers, and there were many others which we have not time to mention now. It will help you to remember some of these if you bear in mind the following lines written by Lord Macaulay.[5]

"Po-mo'-na loves the orchard,
And Li'-ber loves the vine;
And Pa'-les loves the straw-built shed,
Warm with the breath of kine;
And Venus loves the whisper,
Of plighted youth and maid;
In April's ivory moonlight;
Beneath the chestnut shade."

Li'-ber is a Latin name of *Bac'-chus*, the god of Wine.

Both the Greeks and the Romans thought that their gods and goddesses interfered in the affairs of men, that

* Pronounce *bel-lō'-na—e* as in "bell"; *ō* as in "no"; *a* as in "mat." Not *bel-lon'-na*.

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they took sides with people, that every man had his presiding[1] spirit (or *genius*, as they called it), that every woman was under the care of Hera or Juno, and that each person's special spirit took charge of him or her through life.

Each town was supposed to be under the care of one or other of the gods and goddesses—thus Athens gets its name from *Ath-e'-ne*, who was supposed to take special care of this city and people; the Athenians paid her great honour, and built a magnificent temple (the ruins of which still remain), in which to worship her.

The Greeks believed that, in addition to the gods and goddesses, there was a race of people called *He'-roes*, who were sons of the gods and mortals. Like men, they were subject to disease and death, but were greater and more powerful than ordinary men.

In addition to the great gods and goddesses which both the Greeks and Romans worshipped, they believed in a large number of less important deities, imagining that there were in every hill, river, tree, flower, forest, and grove, spirits which protected and watched over these natural features. Generally they called these spirits *Nymphs*,*[2] and more rarely gods and goddesses.

These graceful beings were supposed to be beautiful maidens robed in light, flimsy garments; the most important were the *Nai"-ads*,† who were the Nymphs of brooks, rivers, lakes, and fresh-water springs, and the *Dry'-ads*, who presided over trees and forests.

The Greeks and Romans prayed to these lesser deities, much in the same way as they offered prayers to the greater gods and goddesses, and you will remember in

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* Pronounce *nimfs*—*i* as in "pin."

† " *nāi'-yădz*—*ā* as in "may"; *ă* as in "man."

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Lord Macaulay's well-known poem, "Horatius," that Horatius exclaims :—

"O Ti'-ber, Father Tiber!
To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms,
Take thou in charge this day."

Father Tiber was the god of the river, but the Romans often called the river itself by this name, and the words used by Horatius in the poem are very nearly the words of the great Latin historian, Livy*[1] (who died in the year 17 A.D.), and who tells of the brave deeds of this great hero.

Amongst lesser deities of the earth were the *Sat'-yrs*,† the divinities of the Woods and Fields. They lived in grottos, and were curious creatures, being always represented with the body of a man, and the legs, ears, hair, and horns of a goat, and sometimes with a horse's tail. All of them were fond of dancing, which they indulged in with the Nymphs whenever the opportunity offered, and music and merry-making were their chief employments. The most noted of the Satyrs was *Pan*, the son of Mercury. He was the god of Shepherds and of their flocks and herds, and also of Woods and Fields. His great delight was in the chase, and in wandering through the valleys and over the mountains in search of game.

Pan was the inventor of the Shepherd's pipe (the pan's pipes, or pandean pipes, as they are called), upon which he played with great skill. Like all the Satyrs who dwelt in the woods and forests and among the fastnesses of the mountains, he was greatly dreaded by the people, especially by those who had to pass through lonely and secluded places at night. Of course there was nothing to fear, for Pan was only an imaginary being, but it is from him that

* Pronounce *liv'-i*—*i* as in "live."
† " *sat'-ürz*—*a* as in "sat"; *ü* as in "furz."

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we get the word "panic," meaning any sudden fright without apparent cause.

The Winds were considered to be under the rule of the gods. Jupiter gave them into the control of *Æ'-o-lus* (king of the islands we now call the Lipari Islands in the Mediterranean Sea, to the north of Sicily). Here the king kept them shut up in a gloomy cavern, and only released them whenever he saw fit, or when the gods commanded him. His six sons had each a wind given into his care. Of these *Bo'-re-as*, the wild north wind, and *Zeph'-y-rus*,* the gentle west wind, are the chief.

The gods whom the Greeks and the Romans believed in were worshipped in temples, some of which were very beautiful indeed. Remains of them are still to be seen in many of the old Greek and Roman cities.

Sacrifices of animals were made to the gods, especially bulls and sheep, as well as birds, somewhat similar to those which we read of in the Bible as being offered by the Jews to the true and ever-living God. Priests who conducted the services in the temples, and who offered the sacrifices, were often persons of great power and influence.

Amongst the Greeks, the priests declared that the gods made known their will through them, that they asked questions of the gods and received answers in return. These replies given by a priest or priestess in the name of a god, and, as it was believed, by the will of the god, were called *or'-a-cles*, as were also the places where these utterances were delivered. Thus, if one of the rulers was entering upon a war or other great enterprise, he would consult the *oracle*, as to what he should do, or what would be the result of his undertaking. Even in any ordinary matter of his daily life, a Greek would ask direction from the *oracle*, and

* Pronounce *zĕf'-i-rus*—*ĕ* as in "met"; *i* as in "pin"; *u* as in "us."

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be guided in his conduct by the answer he received through the presiding priest.

For many centuries the oracles had a very strong influence upon the course of human affairs. The priests of the chief temples of the Greeks, in which were the oracles, were looked upon with great reverence, and did much to help on good government, and to secure that justice was done amongst the people in cases of dispute. Not only was the temple, or the sanctuary, where these utterances were given called an Oracle, but the deity himself (or herself), who was supposed to give such answers, had the same name.

The chief religious centre of ancient Greece was at *O-lym'-pi-a.** This was the name given to a beautiful valley in *E'-lis,*†[1] where was a magnificent temple erected to the worship of Zeus. It was built on the banks of a lovely stream, which ran into the Mediterranean on the west coast of Greece, a few miles below the island now called *Zan'-te.*‡[2] Every year great festivals were held at Olympia, many sacrifices were offered, and many athletic contests took place.

The chief of these festivals happened every four years, and was held at the time of the first full-moon after Midsummer; it lasted five days. There were contests in running, leaping, throwing the quoit[3] and the javelin,[4] in wrestling and boxing, in chariot races, horse races, foot races for boys and men, and many other manly exercises. Prizes were given to those who excelled, and, although the value of the prizes was very small indeed, for the chief one was only a wreath for the head made of the leaves of the wild olive tree, great glory accrued[5] to the man who gained a prize at one of the Olympian contests. Very often the

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* Pronounce *ō-lĭm'-pĭ-ă*—*ō* as in "no"; *ĭ* as in "pin"; *ă* as in "about."

† " *ē'-lis*—*ē* as in "me"; *i* as in "pin." Not *ēl'-is.*

‡ " *zăn'-tā*—*ă* as in "mat"; *ā* as in "tale."

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town or city from which the victor came gave the successful candidate great reward in money, and many much-valued privileges. These games died out about the fourth century A.D.

Both the Greeks and the Romans had many noted poets, and some of the noblest poetry that the world has ever known was written in their languages. One of the greatest of the Greek poets was Homer. We do not know very much about him, indeed it is not even known, for certain, where he was born, for seven different places[1] claim to have been his birthplace. He was the most famous of all the Greek poets, and is supposed to have written two long and splendid poems. One is called *The Il'-i-ad*; it tells how the Greeks went to *Il'-i-um*, or *Troy*,[2] a city in Asia-Minor, and laid siege to the city for ten years. In addition to the wonderful stories of the valour of great men engaged in this war, many of the myths and legends believed in by the Greeks are told by the poet. The other great poem supposed to have been written by Homer is *The Od'-ys-sey*;* in it are related the marvellous adventures of *O-dys'-se-us*,† or, as he was often called, *U-lys'-ses*,‡ during ten years' wandering in endeavouring to reach his native land after the close of the great war. As in the Iliad, many of the old Greek legends and myths are related in this poem.

One of the greatest poets of the Romans was *Ver'-gil*,§[3] and another one, equally famous, was *Ov'-id.*‖[4] Each of these writers had learnt much from the beautiful Greek poetry written by many clever men, and especially from the poems said to have been written by Homer. Vergil's chief

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* Pronounce *od'-is-si* - *o* as in "odd"; *i* as in "hiss."

† " *ô-dis'-si-us*—*ô* as in "no"; *i* as in "dis"; *u* as in "us"; or *ô-dis'-sûs*—*û* as in "use."

‡ " *û-lis'-seez*—*û* as in "pure"; *i* as in "list"; *ee* as in "seem."

§ " *ver'-jil*—*e* as in "her"; *i* as in "jill." Also spelt **Virgil.**

‖ " *ov'-id*—*o* as in "not"; *i* as in "pin." Not *ô'-vid*—*ô* as in "no."

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poem is called the *Æ-ne'-id.** It tells of the adventures of the Trojan hero *Æ-ne'-as* after the fall of Troy, thus carrying on the story told by Homer. Æneas wished to find a new country where he and his people could build a new Troy. In the course of the narrative, this poet also tells many of the old tales believed in by the Romans and the Greeks.

The poet Ovid was also well learned in Greek poetry, and he, likewise, in his poems gives a number of the legends about the gods and goddesses and the heroes that both the Greeks and the Romans believed in. Many of our own poets also have made use of these "Tales of Old," and some of the beautiful passages they have written about the gods and heroes of long-past times you have already read. Wordsworth,[1] in "The Excursion," thus tells how the Ancient Greeks peopled all nature with invisible beings having wonderful powers.

"In that fair clime, the lonely herdsman, stretched
On the soft grass through half a summer's day,
With music lulled his indolent repose:
And, in some fit of weariness, if he,
When his own breath was silent, chanced to hear
A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds
Which his poor skill could make, his fancy fetched,
Even from the blazing chariot of the Sun,
A beardless Youth,[2] who touched a golden lute,
And filled the illumined groves with ravishment.[3]
The nightly hunter, lifting a bright eye
Up towards the crescent moon, with grateful heart
Called on the lovely wanderer who bestowed
That timely light, to share his joyous sport:
And hence a beaming goddess[4] with her Nymphs,
Across the lawn and through the darksome grove,

* Pronounce *ē-nē'-id* or *ē'-nē-id*—*ē* as in "me"; *i* as in "pin."

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(Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes
By echo multiplied from rock or cave),
Swept in the storm of chase, as moon and stars
Glance rapidly along the clouded heaven,
When winds are blowing strong. The traveller slaked
His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and thanked
The Naiad. Sunbeams, upon distant hills
Gliding apace, with shadows in their train,
Might, with small help from fancy, be transformed
Into fleet O'-re-ads[1] sporting visibly.
The Zeph'-yrs,[2] fanning, as they passed, their wings,
Lacked not, for love, fair objects whom they wooed
With gentle whisper. Withered boughs grotesque,
Stripped of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,
From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth
In the low vale, or on steep mountain side;
And, sometimes, intermixed with stirring horns
Of the live deer, or goat's depending[3] beard,—
These were the lurking Satyrs, a wild brood
Of gamesome[4] deities; or Pan himself,
The simple shepherd's awe-inspiring god!"

Some of the stories related by the great Greek and Latin poets are set before you in this little book.

II.—THE LABOURS OF HERCULES.

(*a*) THE BIRTH OF HERCULES.

In addition to paying great honour to their gods and goddesses, the ancient Greeks and Romans also regarded a number of heroes (who were born of a god and a mortal) as lesser divinities. They were noble beings who had, by their brave deeds or their high character, won the respect and gained the admiration of every one. Amongst these may be mentioned *Her'-cu-les*,* one of the most renowned

* Pronounce *hĕr'-kŭ-lēz*—*ĕ* as in "her"; *ŭ* as in "cube"; *ē* as in "leek."

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heroes of ancient times. He was the son of *Zeus* (or Jupiter), and *Alc-me'-ne**[1] and the great grandson of *Per'-seus*.† At the time when he was born, Alcmene and her husband *Am-phit'-ry-on*‡ were living at *Thebes*,§[2] one of the chief cities in the land of Greece, which you must not confound with Thebes on the river Nile, once the capital of Egypt.

Now, though Amphitryon was but the step-father of Hercules, he loved him as much as if he had been his own son. Amphitryon and Alcmene had another son, *Iph'-i-cles*,‖ who was, therefore, half-brother to Hercules.

When Hercules and Iphicles were quite infants, they did not sleep in a common cradle, but in a large shield made of brass. In this, their mother had made them a comfortable bed, and when she wished them to go to sleep she always placed them in this curious kind of cot. Hercules never cried when he was a baby.

Juno, the wife of Jupiter, hated Alcmene very much, looking upon her as a rival, and wished that her son, Hercules, should be put to death. One night a very curious event happened. Amphitryon and Alcmene were fast asleep at midnight, and the two children were also soundly sleeping in the shield by the side of their mother's bed, when two great, venomous snakes glided into the bedroom by a hole under the door, and crept close up to the shield-cradle.

(*b*) HERCULES KILLS TWO SERPENTS.

The eyes of the two serpents glowed so brightly that they lit up the whole of the room as though there were a great fire in it. On reaching the shield, they raised their heads on the side where Hercules was lying, intending to

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* Pronounce *alk-mē'-nē*—*a* as in "man"; *ē* as in "me."
† " *pėr'-sūs*—*ė* as in "her"; *ū* as in "duty."
‡ " *am-fit'-ri-on*—*a* as in "am"; *i* as in "fit"; *o* as in "on."
§ " as one syllable only.
‖ " *if'-i-klēz*—*i* as in "if"; *ē* as in "me."

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creep into the shield and bite the child. In doing this they shook the shield, and Iphicles at once awoke. In great fear he raised a terrible cry, and this roused Alcmene. As soon as she saw the light which filled the room, in great haste she woke her husband, who at once sprang out of bed and hurriedly took down his sword, which hung on a nail at the head of the bed.

'Hercules squeezed the life out of them.'—*p.* 23.

Hercules was now awake, but he did not appear in the least afraid of the serpents, and so did not, like his brother, raise a loud cry, but sat up in his bed, laughing. As the two serpents were bending their heads over the edge of the shield to bite him, he seized them by the throat, one in each hand, held them tightly, and so prevented them from striking at and biting him with their forked tongues.

They twisted and twined, and wriggled about in

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all ways to try to wind themselves round him or to escape from his grasp, but it was to no purpose. Hercules held them tightly by the neck, till he had squeezed the life out of them. Being dead, they were no longer able to dart rays of light from their once flashing eye-balls.

Amphitryon, having seized his sword, approached the serpents, but he could now see nothing, for it was quite dark, and everything lay in the deepest obscurity. He called to the servants to bring a light, and when they had done so, he perceived the two dead creatures in the hands of Hercules, who laughed at this wonderful feat, feeling quite pleased at having performed it.

(*c*) THE CHILDHOOD OF HERCULES.

While yet a young boy, Hercules was very big for his age. He had a good appetite and ate much meat and bread, but he never cared for sweet things, and grew up to be a strong youth. He learned to read and to write, to ride on horse-back, to drive chariots with one or two horses, to shoot with bow and arrows, and to cast the javelin, which latter he did with unerring exactitude. He also exercised himself in wrestling, at which he was very skilful, and in fighting with the *ces'-tus*, a kind of gauntlet or boxing-glove, consisting of a stout leather thong or strap, sometimes loaded with pieces of lead or iron, twisted round the hand and wrist, and often up the arm of the boxer, so as to render his blows more effective. The cestus was indeed a terrible weapon.

There was a good and wise Cen'-taur,* called *Chi'-ron*,† who taught him many things. A Centaur was a very

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* Pronounce *sen'-tär*—*e* as in "sent": *ä* as in "all."

† " *ki'-ron*—*i* as in "kind"; *o* as in "on."

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remarkable creature, half man and half horse; that is, the trunk, head, and arms were those of a man, and the rest of the body was that of a horse. Some of the Centaurs were supposed to be rude and savage beings, but others, like Chiron, were beneficent, and performed many useful actions. Chiron taught Hercules astronomy, so that he knew all the principal stars. He also instructed him in botany, so that he knew, and could easily distinguish, the various trees, plants, and herbs. He taught him zoology, so that he became skilled in the knowledge of the animals that lived in Greece.

Hercules loved greatly to listen to the teaching of Chiron, and made great progress under his tutor. Chiron was specially skilled in hunting, in gymnastics,[1] and in medicine, and some of the most famous heroes of these early days were his pupils. Not only was Hercules a diligent scholar, but he was also obedient. He had, however, one great fault, he was of a very hasty and passionate temper. When anything vexed him, or when things did not happen just as he expected, he became almost mad with rage, and then he often did what was wrong or foolish. As soon as the passionate fit was over he was intensely sorry, but it was then too late, for what was done could not be undone. His father and mother, unfortunately, had not trained him, in his early years, to govern his temper.

In addition to the Centaur, Hercules had a teacher called *Li'-nus*,* who taught him how to play on the lyre, a kind of harp. This was the national musical instrument of ancient Greece, and, as you have already learnt, was first made by Hermes, son of Jupiter, from a tortoise-shell. One day Hercules was very inattentive, and Linus very properly reproved him. The youth at once became furious,

* Pronounce *li'-nus*—*i* as in "line"; *u* as in "us."

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and seizing the lyre, dealt his tutor such blows with it on the head that he killed him.

After this, his father would no longer allow him to remain in the house. He sent him to live with the herdsmen who kept the droves of oxen which fed on *Mount Ci-thæ'-ron*,* a lofty range of mountains which runs across the northern part of central Greece. The famous city of Thebes lies to the north of it. The upper part of the range was covered with extensive forests, and on the lower slopes and at the foot were rich meadows where many cattle were pastured. In the forest district an enormous and ferocious lion had roamed for many years, and had already torn in pieces and devoured many of the oxen, as well as some of the herdsmen and other people in the neighbourhood. Hercules armed himself with a heavy club of iron, and with one blow on the head struck the beast dead. As a reward for this brave deed, Amphitryon allowed him to return to the home of his childhood at Thebes.

It was while meditating in solitude (as he watched the flocks) as to the path of life which he should choose, that a notable event happened. Two tall and beautiful women appeared before him, one called *Pleasure* and the other *Virtue*. He entered into conversation with them; Pleasure promised him a life of enjoyment free from care; Virtue a life of toil and hard trials, but crowned with honour and glory. He decided for Virtue, and most of his after-life was spent in doing good and in righting wrongs.

* Pronounce *sī-thē'-ron*—ī as in "sin"; *th* as in "thin"; *ē* as in "me"; *o* as in "on." Not *sī*, as in "sigh."

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(*d*) HERCULES FREES THE THEBANS FROM PAYING TRIBUTE, AND KILLS HIS OWN THREE CHILDREN.

At this time the Thebans had, for many years, been compelled to pay an annual tribute of one hundred oxen to the King of the *Min'-y-ans.** Hercules was very indignant that his city should have to pay this heavy tax, so, when the King of the Minyans sent his chiefs to claim the tribute, he cut off their noses and ears and drove them out of Thebes. Then the King came with a mighty army to punish the Thebans.

Now the King of Thebes, who was called *Cre'-on*,† was a great coward, and so had never had the courage to confront the enemy and endeavour to free his people from the unjust tax. He now, however, made Hercules his general, and this so pleased the Thebans that it gave both the citizens and the soldiers great confidence in the war which was about to take place.

Minerva presented Hercules with a complete suit of armour made of gold. Mercury gave him a sword, and Apollo a bow and arrows. Led by so valiant a hero the Thebans gained a glorious victory over their enemies; the King of the Minyans was killed, and Hercules imposed on their chief city a tribute of two hundred oxen to be sent every year to the city of Thebes.

As a reward for this glorious victory, Creon gave his daughter *Meg'-a-ra*‡ in marriage to Hercules. Three children were born to them, and for many years Hercules lived a happy life at Thebes.

But Juno, who still wished to have Hercules put to death, now caused a serious illness to fall upon him. This

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* Pronounce *min'-ī anz*—*ī* as in "pin"; *a* as in "and."
† " *krē'-on*—*ē* as in "me"; *o* as in "not."
‡ " *meg'-a-ra*—*e* as in "met"; *a* as in "ask,"

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ended in his losing his senses and becoming mad, so that he fancied his dear children were wild and ferocious beasts. Seizing his bow and arrows, he shot at and killed them. When he recovered his senses, he recognized the dead children whom he loved so much, and, full of anguish and remorse at the crime which he had committed, he rushed wildly away from the city and secreted himself in the forest.

(*e*) THE ORACLE ORDERS HERCULES TO GO AND SERVE EU-RYS'-THEUS.*

In olden days, when people did not know what they ought to do in matters of every-day life, or when perplexing circumstances arose, they consulted an Oracle, thereby asking Apollo to give them his advice. Now Oracles were found in many of the temples which were erected in all Greek countries. In each of these temples resided a priest, and sometimes a priestess, and those who came to the Oracle to obtain advice asked questions, and Apollo gave the reply through the priest or priestess. Thus, if a king thought about making war, he first sent to the Oracle and asked advice, and if Apollo made reply that he would be beaten, then he gave up the idea.

The most celebrated Oracle in the time of Hercules was at *Del'-phi*.† Delphi was a small Greek town situated about six miles from the north coast of the Gulf of Corinth, and just at the foot of *Mount Par-nas'-sus*. Even down to the end of the fourth century A.D. this Oracle, and the temple containing it, were famous.

It was a priestess who gave the replies at Delphi. She used to sit in the temple on a tripod, a kind of bronze throne resting on three legs. Seated upon this throne, which

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* Pronounce *û-ris'-thûs*—*û* as in "pure"; *i* as in "risk"; *û* as in "use."
† „ *del'-fi—e* as in "dell"; *i* as in "fine."

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was placed over a cleft in the ground in the innermost sanctuary, the priestess gave answers to all those who questioned her. It was the custom for any who had followed the advice of the Oracle, and then succeeded in their enterprises, to bring to the temple costly presents, consisting of vessels of gold, or silver, or brass, and the temple was full of such offerings. The priestess, who was usually a maiden of high birth, was called the *Pyth'-i-a*,* and was noted over all the known world, and the temple in which she sat was one of the most magnificent buildings in ancient Greece.

Hercules, troubled and distressed, came to Delphi. He entered the temple, told the Pythia about the great sorrow he felt at having killed his three children, and asked her what he should do. The Pythia gave answer that he must go to the city of *Tir'-yns*† and there patiently serve Eurystheus, the King of the *Ar'-gives*,‡[1] and do everything he was commanded. She also told the sorrowful father that the king would impose upon him twelve great and arduous labours, so difficult and dangerous that in performing any one of them he might easily lose his life. Nevertheless, if he proved patient and courageous, the gods would come to his aid, and, when he had successfully completed the twelve labours, then the sorrow of his heart would leave him; he would be happy once more, and after his death would be placed among the gods.

Tiryns was a city in Greece, situated near the coast, a little distance from *Ar'-gos*, and about three miles from the shores of what is now called the Gulf of *Nau'-pli-a*.§ It was built on a rock, and the remains of its massive walls are still to be seen. King Eurystheus was a great coward, as well as a bad man; he was incapable of doing a good

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* Pronounce *pith'-i-a*—*i* as in "pith"; *a* as in "mat."
† " *tir'-inz*—*i* as in "tin."
‡ " *ar'-jivz*—*a* as in "are"; *i* as in "dine." (Not "g" hard)
§ " *nă'-pli-a* *ă* as in "ball"; *i* as in "lit"; *a* as in "fat."

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action, and utterly detested all those who tried to lead good and useful lives.

Hercules did as the Oracle commanded, went with patience and resignation to Tiryns and presented himself before the king, saying that he had been ordered by the Pythia to come and serve him, and that he was ready to obey his commands.

(*f*) THE FIRST LABOUR.—HERCULES SLAYS THE LION OF NE′-ME-A.*

King Eurystheus then told Hercules to go to *Nemea* and to kill a lion which he would find there. Nemea was a wooded valley between high mountains, situated about ten miles south-west of Corinth, and it formed part of the territory over which Eurystheus ruled. In this forest, a very fierce lion roamed about and had his lair. His hide was so thick and tough that no sword was able to pierce it, and the short spears which the herdsmen threw at him to frighten him away, bounded off as from a stone wall, without doing him any harm. When the savage beast saw these unfortunate men, he sprang upon them and tore them to pieces. Hercules entered the forest and placed himself, after the manner of huntsmen, behind the trees in such a way that he could see the ferocious beast, but the creature could not see him when he was attacking.

Hercules had not long to wait, for soon the raging lion entered the forest. He had just slaughtered and eaten several oxen, and his jaws and his mane were all covered with blood, which he was licking off with his immense red tongue. When the lion roared, the noise sounded like thunder reverberating[1] through the forest, and all the earth trembled. The fierce beast lashed his sides with his huge

* Pronounce *nē′-mē-a* or *nē-mē′-a—ē* as in "me"; *a* as in "mat."

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tail as he passed along. Hercules shot one of the arrows from his bow, but it glanced from the animal's side and fell to the ground. He let fly a second arrow, but, though he sent it with such force that it would have pierced the armour of a man and passed through his body, it was unable to pierce the thick, tough skin of this animal.

Just at the moment when Hercules had shot his second arrow the beast caught sight of him. When a lion is crouching to make a spring, he places himself with the under-part of his body parallel with the ground, draws up his tail between his legs, and with one bound he can cover a distance equal to the length of a good-sized room. Hercules rolled his mantle round his left arm in order to turn the lion to one side as he sprang at him; and in his right hand he held an immense club, which he had cut in the forest. Just as the lion was about to seize him, he brought the club down on the creature's head with tremendous force, and felled him to the ground. But the beast was not killed, for he got up on his feet and looked round quite bewildered. Then Hercules, leaving him no time to recover, rushed upon him, seized him round the neck with his two arms, and, forcing him to the ground, stood with his feet upon the creature's hind legs, and strangled him.

When the lion was quite dead, Hercules flayed[1] him and wrapped the skin round himself, placing the jaws of the creature on his own head like a helmet, and the two fore paws round his neck. His club had been broken on the head of the lion, the bones of whose skull were very hard. So he cut for himself another weapon, much larger and heavier, from one of the trees near. From this time, wherever he went, he always wore the lion's skin, and carried the club with him.

This was Hercules' First Labour.

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(*g*) THE SECOND LABOUR.—HERCULES KILLS THE HY′-DRA* OF LER′-NA.†

Hercules now returned to Tiryns and told Eurystheus that the lion was dead. On hearing this the king was very much afraid of him. For his own safety, therefore, he had a large room built underground with plates of hard bronze, in which he took refuge whenever Hercules came to see him. In one of the walls of this building was an opening covered with trellis-work, through which Eurystheus talked to Hercules and commanded him to go and kill the *Hydra of Lerna.* This Hydra was an immense reptile, like a serpent, but as long as a ship, and had nine heads, the middle one of which was immortal.[1] The monster dwelt in the marshes of Lerna, a boggy region south of Argos.

Hercules seated himself in a war-chariot driven by his friend and companion *I-o-la′-us*,‡ and the two men started for Lerna. On the approach of Hercules the Hydra crept away and hid itself in a hole in the ground; but Hercules took his bow, wrapped the head of one of his arrows in tow well soaked in pitch and sulphur, set fire to it, and then shot it into the hole where the Hydra had taken refuge. The creature rushed madly out and threw itself upon Hercules. The hero seized it with one hand by the neck, out of which grew the nine heads, but the monster wound its long tail round one of his legs. With his club Hercules struck the nine heads one after the other, splitting each open, but scarcely had one head been destroyed when two others grew up quickly in its place. At the same time, whilst he was fighting with the Hydra, an immense crab came out of the marsh, seized Hercules by the leg round which the serpent had wound its tail, and held it tight between its

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* Pronounce *hi′-dra*—*i* as in "high"; *a* as in "mat."
† " *lĕr′-na*—*ĕ* as in "her"; *a* as in "mat."
‡ " *i-ō-lā′-us*—*i* as in "pine"; *ō* as in "no"; *ā* as in "lane"; *u* as in "us."

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claws, which caused much pain to the hero. This crab was a friend of the Hydra's, and had come to its succour, but Hercules crushed it to death with the heel of the foot that was free. All this time Hercules was striking fierce blows with his club upon the heads of the Hydra, but new ones continued to spring up, and, but for the help of his friend Iolaus, he would never have completed his awful task.

Iolaus cut down several trees, gathered them together, and made an immense bonfire; then, when Hercules had struck one of the heads, he took a burning brand and applied it to the place whence the head had sprung, so that another one could not grow there in its place. When all the heads were thus crushed, the Hydra died. Hercules next dipped the points of his arrows in the creature's blood, for it was so venomous that if one of these poisoned arrows only scratched the skin of a man or other animal, death followed at once. The ninth, or immortal head, Hercules buried under a huge rock, and there it remains, so it is said, to this day.

This was Hercules' Second Labour.

(*h*) THE THIRD LABOUR.—HERCULES CATCHES THE STAG OF CER-Y-NI′-A.*

Eurystheus now gave Hercules orders to catch the Stag of *Cerynia*, and to bring it to him alive. This stag had golden horns, and ran so swiftly that neither horse nor dog was able to catch it. Now Hercules was as agile and swift as he was strong. For a whole year he pursued the stag, and at last overtook him, and drove him into a deep snow-drift in a distant northern land. Here he seized him, and brought him to Tiryns on his shoulder.

This was his Third Labour.

* Pronounce *ser-i-ni′-a*—*e* as in "her"; *i* as in "pit"; *i* as in "me"; *a* as in "sofa."

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(*i*) THE FOURTH LABOUR.—HERCULES CATCHES ALIVE THE WILD BOAR OF ER-Y-MAN′-THUS.*

After his last labour Eurystheus commanded Hercules to catch and bring to him alive the wild Boar of *Erymanthus*.

Erymanthus is a mountain in *Ar-ca′-di-a*, a part of Central Greece, west of Argos. Here the boar lived and wandered about in all directions through the fields of wheat and the gardens, destroying everywhere the produce of the land. The people gathered themselves together and pursued the beast with spears, but it turned on its assailants, and wounded them so severely with its immense tusks that many of them died.

Hercules set off to Erymanthus. The journey was long and weary, and one evening, having reached a cavern which was the abode of a Centaur named *Phol′-us*,† he begged the Centaur to allow him to stay the night there. The mountain was inhabited by a large number of Centaurs, who were a savage and unfriendly race and most inhospitable.[1] They had an immense cask of wine, which was their common property, and this was kept in the cave of Pholus. They drunk from it only on those days when they met together to hold one of their revels.

After supper, Hercules begged for a drink of wine. Pholus replied that he had nothing but the wine in this one cask, and that the other Centaurs would certainly kill him if he touched it when they were not there. Hercules replied that he did not believe him, and went and drew a pot of wine for himself.

Now this wine was not like ordinary wine which people usually drink, for it had been given to the Centaurs by

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* Pronounce *er-ĭ-man′-thus*—*e* as in "her"; *ĭ* as in "pin"; *a* as in "man"; *u* as in "us."

† „ *fŏl′-us*—*ŏ* as in "not"; *u* as in "us."

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Bac'-chus, the god of Wine, as a present. It had a strong perfume like that of the most beautiful roses; and this was so powerful that when the wine was drawn out of the cask the odour could be detected as far away as a man could see.

The Centaurs were not long in knowing what had happened. They smelled the wine, and at once rushed towards the cave in order to kill Pholus. Some of them seized as weapons immense pieces of rock which they tore out of the mountain sides, others rooted up pine trees and fir trees, for the Centaurs never fought with swords and spears, and very few of them had bows and arrows.

Hercules stood at the entrance to the cave as the Centaurs approached, and to defend himself, he threw burning fire-brands at them; then he took up his bow and arrows, of which the tips had been dipped in the blood of the Hydra of Lerna, and shot at the Centaurs. All those who were touched by the arrows died instantly, as though they had been bitten by the Hydra itself. On seeing some of their comrades dead, the other Centaurs at once took refuge in flight, with Hercules in hot pursuit.

Pholus, greatly astonished that such a little weapon was able to kill so great a creature, drew an arrow out of the dead body of one of the Centaurs, and examined it. By accident, he let it slip out of his hand. It fell on his foot and pierced it, causing his instant death.

Hercules, on his return from the pursuit, found the dead body of the unfortunate Pholus. He was bitterly grieved to think that, through his having opened the cask in spite of the Centaur's warning, he had brought about this sad accident. He burnt the body of Pholus, and carefully buried the ashes and the calcined[1] bones.

Hercules now set forward again on his journey to Erymanthus, thinking that the boar would probably fall upon

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him as it had attacked other hunters who had chased it, and that if it did this he would then be able to catch it. But the boar was afraid of him and took to flight. Hercules pursued, raising a loud cry which echoed and re-echoed through the forest, and the boar, full of fear, rushed forward, and jumped over the edge of a steep precipice into a deep ravine, which at this time was full of snow, for all the mountains of Arcadia were thus covered. Hercules then took a stout rope, with a strong running noose; this he threw so skilfully that it caught the legs and the body of the animal as it was struggling at the bottom of the ravine in order to get out. He dragged the creature up to the place where he was standing, then, taking it on his shoulders, he carried it to Tiryns. The beast lay on its back with its legs and feet in the air grunting and kicking in its attempts to free itself; but it was quite useless.

This was the Fourth Labour.

(*j*) THE FIFTH LABOUR.—HERCULES CLEANS THE STABLES OF KING AU′-GE-AS.*

No sooner had Hercules arrived at Tiryns, than Eurystheus commanded him to clean out the stables of *Augeas*, and to perform the whole work in a single day. Augeas was the King of *E′-lis* (or *E-le′-ia*† as it is sometimes called), a country on the extreme west of the southern part of Greece. The king possessed 300 oxen, which he kept in one immense stable, so large that the circuit round it was as great as the distance round *Mount Pal-a-ti′-nus*‡[1] in Rome. This stable was really an immense yard surrounded by a wall, having many arched vaults inside where the beasts were stabled at evening when they returned from the pastures.

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* Pronounce *aw′-jē-as*—*aw* as in "law"; *ē* as in "me"; *a* as in "ass." Sometimes accented *aw-jē′-as*.

† " *ē-lē′-ya*—*ē* as in "me"; *a* as in "sofa."

‡ " *pal-a-tī′-nus*—*a* as in "mat"; *ī* as in "tiny"; *u* as in "us."

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The servants of the king were very idle, and never cleaned out the yard, so that the filth and rubbish had collected to such an extent that the cattle were not able to enter the yard through the archways which had been provided for that purpose. In the ordinary way it would have taken a whole year of hard work to clean out and carry away the immense accumulation of manure and refuse which filled this horrid place.

Close by flowed a river that was fed by the waters of two swift streams, which descended with great impetuosity from the mountains. Hercules dug a deep trench from the banks of the river as far as the yard, and another from the opposite side of the yard back to the river. Having made two large openings in the walls, he turned the waters of the river into the trench. The fierce torrent rushed into the yard and out again by the second aperture, carrying everything before it as it flowed violently away. Hercules then stopped up the entrance to the trench, and the river flowed in its ordinary channel as before. In this manner the whole yard was cleansed in a single day, and the floor became as clean as the pavement of a street after heavy rain.

Augeas had promised Hercules the tenth part of all his flocks and herds if he accomplished this work in a single day, but he was a man of bad faith, and refused to keep his promise. He was well punished for violation of his word, for, after Hercules had completed all the tasks imposed upon him, he declared war against Augeas and slew him.

This was the Fifth Labour of Hercules.

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(*k*) THE SIXTH LABOUR.—HERCULES DRIVES AWAY THE CANNIBAL BIRDS OF LAKE STYM-PHA′-LUS.*

No sooner had Hercules returned to Tiryns than Eurystheus ordered him at once to go and drive away the birds from the marsh of *Stym-pha′-lus.* Stymphalus was a district in the north-eastern part of Arcadia, a region in the centre of the southern part of Greece. These birds, like the *Har′-pies*,[1] had beaks and claws of iron, with which they tore in pieces either men or animals that came near the marsh, and when they had feasted themselves upon what they had killed they flew back again to the marsh. The marsh resembled an immense lake, and there were so many trees growing on its margin that it appeared in the distance as though it were a great forest. It was impossible for a boat to sail on it, not because the water was shallow, but because it was like thick, sticky mud. It was equally impossible to walk on it, because as soon as anyone stepped upon it he sank in the mire. Hercules, therefore, would never have been able to clear the marsh of these frightful birds if *Vul′-can*[2] had not come to his assistance.

This the god did by making for him a large rattle of brass. Hercules took his stand on a mountain near the marsh, and sounded the rattle so violently that it made a terrific noise, and the frightened birds, in great alarm, took wing and flew away. As soon as they commenced to fly Hercules seized his bow and arrows, and shot as many of them as he could; the remainder succeeded in reaching the other side of the marsh. They, however, had been so terrified that they continued their journey and never returned.

This was the Sixth Labour of Hercules.

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* Pronounce *stim-fā′-lus*—*i* as in "stint"; *ā* as in "fate"; *u* as in "us."

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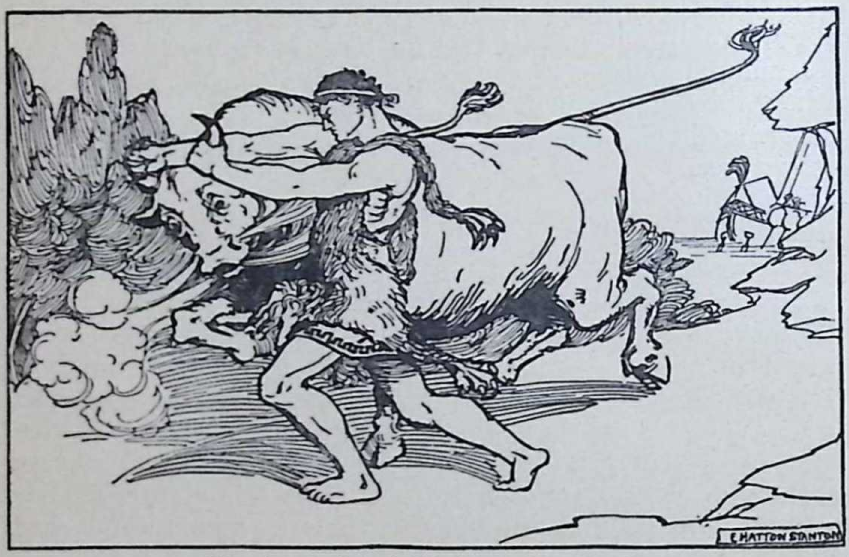
(*l*) THE SEVENTH LABOUR.—HERCULES CAPTURES THE CRE′-TAN* BULL.

Eurystheus now commanded Hercules to go and capture the ferocious Bull of *Crete* and bring it back to him. Crete, now sometimes called Can′-di-a, is a large island in the Mediterranean, situated to the south-east of Greece and the south-west of the peninsula now known as Asia-Minor.



'Hercules seized the bull by its two horns.'—*p.* 39.

It was then ruled over by a king called *Mi′-nos.*† It is mountainous, and was at that time covered with thick forests, in which ranged many wild animals, and amongst them a terrible bull.

Hercules set sail for Crete, and at once asked leave of

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* Pronounce *krē′-tan*—*ē* as in "me"; *a* as in "tan."

† " *mī′-nos*—*ī* as in "mine"; *o* as in "loss."

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Minos to catch and take away the bull. Minos willingly gave him the permission he required, for the bull was ravaging the whole country, and no one had yet been able to capture it.

Hercules boldly encountered the bull, seized it by its two horns, and dragged it after him until he came on board his ship. Then he returned to the *Pel-o-pon-ne'-sus**[1] and so to Tiryns.

Now Neptune had given orders that the bull was not to be killed; so on reaching Tiryns it was set at liberty; it became a great plague and did immense damage, ravaging the country, until one day it was killed by *The'-seus*,†[2] another of the great heroes of Greece.

This was the Seventh Labour of Hercules.

(*m*) THE EIGHTH LABOUR.—HERCULES CATCHES THE HORSES OF DI-O-ME'-DES.‡

Eurystheus next commanded Hercules to bring to Tiryns the horses of *Di-o-me'-des*, King of *Thrace*.§ Thrace was a region in the south-eastern part of Europe lying north of Greece. The horses of the king were as savage as wild beasts, and fed on the flesh of human beings, and Diomedes, who was a very cruel man, caused all strangers who arrived in his country to be thrown to the horses, which immediately tore them in pieces and devoured them, just as though they had been savage tigers or hungry wolves.

As Diomedes refused to allow Hercules to catch the horses, he attacked the cruel tyrant, captured him, and put him to the same death that he had inflicted on others, for

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* Pronounce *pel-ō-pon-nē'-sus—e* as in "pelf"; *ō* as in "no"; *o* as in "pond"; *ē* as in "me"; *u* as in "us."

† " *thē'-sūs—th* as in "thin"; *ē* as in "theme"; *ū* as in "use." Sometimes the name is pronounced *thē'-sī-ūs—ē* as in "me"; *ī* as in "sit"; *ū* as in "us."

‡ " *dī-ō-mē'-dēz—ī* as in "dine"; *ō* as in "no"; *ē* as in "me."

§ " *thrās—ā* as in "thane."

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he threw him amongst his own horses, and these soon tore him in pieces. He thus perished miserably, suffering the fate he so richly deserved.

After devouring their master, the horses became quite tame, and were easily secured by Hercules, who transported them to his ship, and returned once more to Tiryns. But Eurystheus commanded that the horses should have their liberty, and be allowed to run at will in the forests. Soon the wild beasts that lived there tore them in pieces, and thus there was an end to these cruel animals.

This was the Eighth Labour of Hercules.

(*n*) THE NINTH LABOUR.—HERCULES TAKES POSSESSION OF THE GIRDLE OF HIP-POL′-Y-TE,* QUEEN OF THE AMAZONS.

The Amazons were a race of women who rode on horseback, and went to war and fought as bravely as the greatest heroes. They are supposed to have dwelt on the shores of the Black Sea, and in the Caucasus Mountains. In early times they were often at war with the Greeks.

Their queen, whose name was *Hip-pol′-y-te*, wore a beautiful and very valuable girdle of gold, garnished with precious stones, which had been given her by Mars. Eurystheus had heard about this magnificent ornament, for its fame was world-wide, and wished to have it, so that he might make a present of it to his daughter. He therefore ordered Hercules to go and obtain possession of it, and bring it to him. Hercules let it be known throughout all Greece that he was about to undertake an expedition to fight against the Amazons, and he invited all brave men who desired to take part in this dangerous and difficult enterprise to accompany him.

* Pronounce *Hip-pol′-I-tē*—*i* as in "hip"; *o* as in "Polly"; *I* as in "pin"; *ē* as in "me."

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Many valiant men having joined him, they all set sail, and in due time arrived at the country of the Amazons. Hercules at once let the queen know the instructions he had received from Eurystheus. Hippolyte recognized that Hercules was obliged to obey Eurystheus, and carry out any commission charged upon him by the orders of Apollo, and so was inclined to allow him to have the girdle, but the other Amazons would not consent at all to this, and attacked Hercules and his companions.

Then a great battle took place—a battle which has been many times represented on beautiful pieces of sculpture by the old Greek artists. The Amazons fought on horseback, Hercules and his associates were on foot, and but for the valour of Hercules the women would have gained the victory. At last Hercules put them to flight and took Hippolyte prisoner. However, he did her no harm, but as soon as he had taken off her belt, restored her to liberty. He then once more took ship to return to Greece.

Before reaching Greece, Hercules cast anchor in a bay near Troy. Here he landed, and then went up to the city, which was built on a hill, at only a short distance from the coast. At this time a very rich and powerful king, called *La-om'-e-don**, ruled over Troy, but as he had offended the two gods Apollo and Neptune, they, in revenge, brought upon his kingdom great calamities and misery, and this was how it happened.

Troy was a very large city, but it had round it neither walls nor fortifications. Apollo and Neptune came to the king, and offered to surround the city with a high and strong wall which no enemy should be able to destroy, if he would reward them suitably for their work.

The king, thinking this was a good opportunity to

* Pronounce *lā-om'-ē-don*—*ā* as in "lay"; *o* as in "not"; *ē* as in "me"; *o* as in "don."

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secure defences for his city, made a bargain with them as to the price he would pay when their work was finished.

The two gods built an immensely high wall (part of which remains to this day),[1] with enormous blocks of stone. When all was completed, Laomedon refused to pay what had been agreed upon; he thought the gods were only brave men from whom he had nothing to fear, and he also supposed that he was defended from any enemies on the outside, by the inaccessible walls which they had built.

But the two gods determined to punish Laomedon. Irritated by the disgraceful way in which he had broken his word, Neptune created an immense sea-monster, which rose out of the sea every day, laid waste the land, and destroyed both men and animals, so that no one durst go out of the city. The fields were left uncultivated, and pestilence[2] and famine, with great misery and distress, afflicted the people.

The Trojans wished to kill their king, because of the troubles which had come upon them, and of which they accused him of being the cause.

Laomedon sent to the Oracle to ask what he should do in order to rid his land of the devastating sea-monster. The Oracle ordered him to chain his daughter *He-si'-o-ne** to a rock on the sea-shore, where the monster was accustomed to leave the sea every day; he would come and devour her, and then go away and return no more.

Hercules arrived at the Trojan land just at the moment when Hesione was being chained up. He told the king not to have any fear for his daughter, for he himself had resolved to fight the monster, only he should require some recompense for ridding the land of this terrible scourge. "If I kill the monster," said he to Laomedon, "you must give me

* Pronounce *hē-sī'-ō-nē* ē as in "me"; ī as in "side"; ō as in "no."

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the horse which you have received from Jupiter." Now this was the most beautiful horse in the world, and, therefore, exceedingly valuable. Laomedon was in such trouble that he gladly agreed to pay this reward, though he did not wish to part with the horse. Hercules then gave orders that everyone should enter into the town and stay there, whilst he would remain with Hesione. At the moment when the monster came out of the sea and was hurrying to where Hesione was chained, Hercules attacked it, killed it, and then led Hesione in safety back to her father.

Laomedon was a man who did not keep his promises, and, instead of giving to Hercules the horse as he had bargained, he refused to give him anything. Hercules was exceedingly angry, but as he had not yet finished all the labours which the gods had imposed upon him, he decided not to make war upon Laomedon at that time. He, however, told him that he would return later on and punish him as he deserved. Then he set off for Tiryns, and on his arrival there, gave the girdle to Eurystheus.

This was Hercules' Ninth Labour.

(*o*) THE TENTH LABOUR.—HERCULES TAKES CAPTIVE THE OXEN OF THE MONSTER GE'-RY-ON.*

Not far from the coast of Spain there is an island on which to-day stands the great city of Cadiz, but in those days there was no building upon it. There were only excellent meadows and beautiful pastures in which the cattle of King *Geryon* fed. These cattle, which were all of a reddish-brown colour, were the most beautiful creatures that had ever been seen. They were guarded by a two-headed dog named *Or'-thrus*,† which was so strong that he could fight with two wolves at a time and easily destroy them.

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* Pronounce *jē'-rī-on*—*ē* as in "me"; *ī* as in "pin"; *o* as in "on."

† „ *or'-thrus*—*o* as in "or"; *u* as in "us."

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King Geryon was a most extraordinary man. He was as large as three giants rolled into one, and had three heads, six arms, and six legs. It would, therefore, not be an easy task to accomplish for anyone to take the cattle, even if he should first succeed in killing the dog. Eurystheus tried to persuade himself that Hercules would surely perish in such an enterprise, and so he commanded him to go and find the oxen of Geryon and take possession of them.

Hercules set out at once, armed only with his bow and arrows and his club. His route lay westward through the hot and parched desert of *Lib'-y-a*,*[1] where the sun's rays burn fierce and strong. He became infuriated because he thought that *He'-li-os*,† the god of the Sun, was at that time driving his chariot too near the earth, and scorching it with intense heat. He told him to go farther away, but Helios paid no attention to what Hercules said, and only laughed at him, saying that the road belonged to himself. This treatment caused Hercules to fly into a violent passion, and he made ready to shoot Helios. If he had done so and had killed him, the old Greeks say there would have been no more sun.

The intrepidity of Hercules pleased the god, who told him to calm his angry passions; he also offered to lend him his own golden ship in which to cross the sea, for between Libya and Europe there lies the great Mediterranean Sea. At the western end of this sea, on the two opposite coasts, stand two high rocks which are called to-day the Pillars of Hercules.[2]

The legend tells us that Hercules saw the chariot of the sun sinking down beyond a neck of land which connected two huge rocks, and separated the waters of the Mediterranean Sea from the Atlantic Ocean. He was afraid lest he should lose sight of the Sun-god, so he raised

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* Pronounce *lib'-i-a*—*i* as in "lip"; *a* as in "mat."

† „ *hē'-li-os*—*ē* as in "he"; *i* as in "lip"; *o* as in "lost."

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his club and brought it down with a tremendous crash on the neck of land; it split asunder, the sea rushed in from both sides, and ever since these two rocks have been called the Pillars of Hercules. The one in Europe is the Rock of Gibraltar, the one in Africa is *Ceu'-ta*,* and the water between them is now known as the Straits of Gibraltar.

Whilst Hercules was voyaging over this sea, *O-ce'-a-nus*,† the god of the oceans, wishing to put his courage to the proof, raised a violent tempest. Hercules again took his bow and arrows in his hand, which frightened Oceanus so, that he at once calmed the fury of the waves.

Hercules landed, and immediately set out to look for Geryon's cattle. It was not long before he saw them quietly feeding, watched over by the two-headed dog, Orthrus, and Geryon's herdsman. Hercules killed the dog, and then he slew the herdsman, who richly deserved his fate, for he had allowed the cattle to devour men just as the horses of King Diomedes formerly did.

Hercules now drove the cattle towards the shore. King Geryon soon learnt what had happened, and rushed out to fight Hercules, but he would have done better to have let him alone, for Hercules shot at him with one of his arrows, and left him dead on the field.

Now that Hercules had succeeded in getting the cattle, he decided to take them to Greece through Spain and *Li-gu'-ri-a*,‡ rather than traverse the desert lands, and then sail over the sea again.

Liguria was a district in what is now north-west Italy and south-east France, and the Ligurians gathered in their thousands in order, if possible, to take away the cattle from Hercules. They shot arrows and flung stones at him, but

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* Pronounce *sū'-ta*—*ū* as in "due"; *a* as in "sofa."

† " *ō-sē'-a-nus*—*ō* as in "no"; *ē* as in "see"; *a* as in "mat"; *u* as in "us."

‡ " *lī-gū'-ri-a*—*ī* as in "lie"; *ū* as in "due"; *i* as in "rip"; *a* as in "sofa."

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those who came near to him he killed with his club. Soon his arrows were exhausted, and, as his enemies were very numerous, he would now have been killed, if his father, Jupiter, had not come to his assistance. Jupiter rained enormous rocks down upon the people, and thus killed many of them, while Hercules seized these stones and hurled them at his enemies, till most of them were slain, and the rest utterly routed. You can see these stones to-day, in a district called Crau,* situated in the south of France, to the east of the mouths of the Rhône.

Hercules drove the cattle over the Alps, making a road through the snow and ice; then he led them down to the banks of the river Tiber, where Rome now stands, but at that time there was no city of Rome.

At the foot of the *Av'-en-tine Hill*[1] (one of the seven hills upon which Rome was afterwards built), there was a cave, and in this cave there dwelt a very formidable giant called *Ca'-cus.*† This giant, who breathed fire from his mouth and nostrils, subjected the people of the district round about to all manner of annoyance and torment.

During the night he came from his cave, stole some of the most beautiful of the cattle which Hercules had brought thus far, and drove them into his retreat, but, in order that Hercules should not discover the robbery, and be able to trace the animals by their footprints, he dragged them backwards by their tails, so that the marks on the ground looked as though the cattle had been driven out of, instead of into, the cave.

Hercules searched in all directions for his lost cattle, but was unable to find any trace of them, so he decided to continue his journey with those that were left.

Passing the foot of the Aventine Hill (along a road which

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* Pronounce *krô*—*ô* as in "no."

† " *kā'-kus*—*ā* as in "cavē"; *u* as in "us."

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to-day is one of the chief streets of Rome, leading to what is now called St. Paul's Gate), one of his cattle commenced to bellow. The others, which were fastened up in the cave (for Cacus had barricaded the entrance with immense rocks), immediately replied by deep lowings. Hercules at once thought the cattle must be his, and therefore tore away these blocks of stone. The giant, as he could not escape, sat cowering in the deep recesses of his retreat, and vomited out the flames of his fiery breath against his antagonist; but Hercules did not lose his presence of mind, nor was he frightened. He leaped upon Cacus, seized him by the throat with both hands, and strangled him.

Hercules soon afterwards took ship, and in due course arrived at the isthmus, near to Tiryns (which we now call the Isthmus of Corinth, and which is a very narrow strip of land connecting north and south Greece). Here a terrible giant dwelt, who, as Hercules passed by, hurled a huge rock at him. So heavy was this immense boulder that twenty-four buffaloes would scarcely have been able to move it if it had been placed on a waggon, but Hercules was on his guard. He parried the mass of rock with his club, so that it fell harmlessly to the ground, where it remains to be seen to this day.

The next day he reached Tiryns, where he presented the cattle, all safe and sound, to the wicked Eurystheus.

This was Hercules' Tenth Labour, and it had cost him much trouble and pain.

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(*p*) THE ELEVENTH LABOUR.—HERCULES GETS POSSESSION OF THE APPLES OF THE HES-PER'-I-DES.*

Eurystheus now ordered Hercules to go and obtain possession of the three golden apples from the Garden of the *Hesperides.*

When Juno was married to Jupiter, *Ge*† (the Earth) made her a present of three golden apples. These were

'A dragon who never went to sleep.' –*p.* 49.

planted in the garden of the nymphs who were called the Hesperides, and in time they produced beautiful trees, which, in their turn, bore golden apples. These apples excited the cupidity[1] and ardent desire of many men, who tried to steal them, and the Hesperides were therefore

* Pronounce *hes-per'-i-dēz*—*e* as in "help"; *i* as in "pin"; *ē* as in "deeds."
† „ *g* hard, as in "give"; *e* as in "me."

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obliged to watch the garden most vigilantly. To assist them, they had, instead of a watch-dog, a dragon with one hundred heads, that never went to sleep.

Hercules did not know (neither did any mortal), where this garden was situated; he had, therefore, to make enquiries, which took many days, but at last he was able to set out on his journey. On his way he met the giant *An-tæ'-us*,* the son of the Earth, who was immensely strong, and was also invincible so long as he remained in contact with his mother the Earth. He compelled all strangers who visited his country to wrestle with him, and he always succeeded in overcoming them, because, if any man were strong enough to cast him to the ground, his mother Earth helped him, and the instant he touched ground, new strength came into him, so that he was able to spring up again and overthrow his antagonist.

Hercules having noticed how the strength of Antæus increased every time he was cast[1] when wrestling, seized him in his arms, lifted him so high in the air that his feet no longer touched the ground, and then squeezed him so tightly that he suffocated him.

After this Hercules set off again on his journey, and at last reached Egypt, where *Bu-si'-ris*,† the reigning king, had an altar on which he sacrificed to his gods all those strangers who reached his country. By his orders Hercules was seized; his hands were tied together, a fillet[2] was placed round his head, and salt and flour were sprinkled thereon, just as was done when any animals were being prepared to be slaughtered on the altar. But when one of the priests took the knife in his hand to slay Hercules, his intended victim burst the cords asunder, and slew all the priests, as well as the cruel king.

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* Pronounce *an-tē'-us*—*a* as in "an"; *ē* as in "tea"; *u* as in "us."

† " *bū-sī'-ris* —*ū* as in "pure"; *i* as in "side"; *i* as in "risk."

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As Hercules was so big a man and so strong, it is not surprising that he had an appetite proportionate to his size. One day, when he was exceedingly hungry, he met a peasant guiding two oxen attached to a plough with which he was working in the fields. Hercules demanded of the man something to eat, but the peasant refused to give it him. The hero became so angry that he ran up to the ploughman, unyoked the oxen, killed one of them; broke the plough into pieces, made a fire with the wood, on which he roasted the ox, and then ate the whole of it.

Continuing his journey, Hercules at last came to the Caucasian mountains, an immense range in the south of Europe. On one of the steep sides of these mountains, so steep and high that the summit was quite inaccessible, Jupiter had chained the hero, *Pro-me'-theus.**

Prometheus was one of the *Ti'-tans*,† and the legend about him says that he stole fire from heaven and brought it to earth in a hollow reed for the use of men. Jupiter was so angry with him for doing this, that he chained him to the rocks, where an eagle came every day and tormented him by pecking and biting at his body with his terrible, hooked beak. Hercules shot the bird of prey with one of his arrows, and then begged his father Jupiter to allow Prometheus to be set at liberty. Jupiter gave permission, and the prisoner, on being released from his terrible sufferings, returned to Olympus, where he took his place with the gods. Full of gratitude for his deliverance, Prometheus told Hercules to travel to the far West and find *Atlas*, who would give him the information he desired.

Still journeying onward in search of the golden apples, Hercules next arrived at the edge of the world, where Atlas

* Pronounce *prō-mē'-thūs*—*ō* as in "no"; *ē* as in "me"; *th* as in "thunder"; *ū* as in "use."
† " *ti'-tans*—*i* as in "tiny"; *a* as in "mat."

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stood holding up the heavens above the earth on his shoulders, so as to prevent their falling to the ground.

Atlas was uncle to the Hesperides, and Hercules begged him to try and persuade his nieces to give him the apples.

Now Hercules was not afraid of the dragon, for he had little doubt that he should be able to kill it, but he did not wish to take away the apples from the nymphs by force. He therefore begged Atlas to get them for him, to which Atlas agreed. But as the sky would fall to the earth as soon as he ceased to support it, Hercules was willing to take his place until his return, and hold up the heavenly vault on his shoulders.

The Hesperides gave their uncle the three apples, saying that he might take them to Hercules, if the latter would promise to return them in due time, and as everyone knew that Hercules always kept his word, they had no fears in sending him the golden fruit.

On his return, Atlas, who was tired of standing with the sky on his shoulders, wished to leave Hercules in his place, but Hercules refused, and threatened to let the heavens fall, so Atlas was obliged to give him the apples and take his accustomed burden upon his shoulders again.

Hercules carried the apples to Eurystheus, who would very gladly have kept them, but when the Hero told him of the promise he had made to return them, Eurystheus knew that Jupiter would allow Hercules to punish him if he should withhold the golden fruit. He therefore gave them back again to the giant, though most unwillingly.

Hercules then carried the apples to Minerva, who promised to return them to the Hesperides.

This was Hercules' Eleventh Labour.

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(*q*) THE TWELFTH LABOUR.
HERCULES BRINGS UP FROM THE UNDER-WORLD THE THREE-HEADED DOG CER′-BER-US.*

There was now but one more great labour that Hercules had to accomplish, and as soon as this was properly performed, the giant would no longer be obliged to carry out the behests of Eurystheus, who had ordered him to go and bring up the dog *Cerberus* from the Under-world.

The ancient Greeks had some curious beliefs about the Under-world. They thought that the souls of all people who died went into this lower world, which was sometimes called *Ha′-des*† and sometimes the World of Shades. Here souls were judged by three stern judges, according to what they had done upon earth, and whether they had lived good or evil lives.

These lower regions, ruled over by *Plu′-to*,‡ were surrounded by a dark, gloomy river called the *Styx*.§ When a soul had once gone down into this Under-world, it never returned again to earth or to the body to which it belonged. There was no bridge over the Styx, and the three-headed dog, Cerberus, sat watching at the gate which was the only approach to the river's bank. When the souls reached the bank of the Styx, they were ferried over the river by an old ferryman called *Cha′-ron*,‖[1] but he never took any souls back again; for though Cerberus allowed the souls to pass in at the gate, he would never let any of them return.

Hercules at once set off on this adventure, and came to a huge promontory in the south of Greece; we now call it *Cape Mat-a-pan′*. Here, in the rocks, there are

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* Pronounce *sĕr′-bĕr-us*—*ĕ* as in "her"; *u* as in "us."
† „ *hā′-dēz*—*ā* as in "hay"; *ē* as in "me."
‡ „ *plōō′-tō*—*ōō* as in "boot"; *ō* as in "no."
§ „ like "sticks."
‖ „ *kā′-rŏn*—*ă* as in "cave"; *ŏ* as in "on."

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many grottos, and numerous chasms, wide openings, and passages, one of which, it was said, led down to the Under-world.

Hercules went far down this gloomy passage till he reached the banks of the Styx, but Charon, the ferryman, refused at first to take him over, for, said he, he was too big and heavy, and his weight would swamp the boat.

But the gods must be obeyed, so *Mercury*[1] accompanied Hercules to show him the way. When he reached the other side of the river, the head of the *Me-du'-sa*,* the *Gor'-gon*,† appeared. This head was so fearful to look upon that whoever saw it and was afraid, was at once turned into stone, but Hercules, instead of being afraid, brandished his club, and rushed at the head, when it fled away. Up till now Cerberus had torn in pieces every living man who had descended to the Under-world, but as soon as he saw Hercules he began to howl, and rushed for safety under the throne of Pluto.

Hercules now wished to offer a sacrifice to the gods, and as Pluto possessed a very fine herd of cattle, he selected one of the oxen, intending to kill it. The herdsman, as soon as he saw what was being done, rushed up in great haste, and would have struck Hercules, but no sooner had he come within reach of the latter than he seized him, and was holding him so tightly in his hands that he would have broken every bone in his body had not *Pros'-er-pine*,‡ the wife of Pluto, interceded for him, and the giant set him free.

Pluto and his wife received Hercules very graciously, and gave him permission to take away the fierce dog, Cerberus, if only he could compel him to go with him, and if

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* Pronounce *me-dū'-sa*—*e* as in "met"; *ū* as in "due"; *u* as in "image."

† " *gôr'-gŏn*—*ŏ* as in "not."

‡ " *pros'-ĕr-pīn*—*o* as in "pot"; *ĕ* as in "her"; *ī* as in "pin." NOTE.—This English spelling is pronounced in *three* syllables, but the Latin form, Pro-ser'-pi-na, is pronounced in *four* syllables, and the Greek form Per-seph'-o-ne, is also in *four* syllables.

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he would also promise to bring him back again. Cerberus was as big as an elephant; he had three heads, and instead of hair he had a mane like that of a lion, every hair of which was a snake; and his tail also was an immense serpent.

Hercules, in order to protect himself, was wearing the invulnerable armour[1] of which Vulcan had made him a present. Holding the lion's skin up before him as a shield, he seized Cerberus by the throat, and dragged him away by superior force. The snake which formed the dog's tail bit him continually, but the giant did not slacken his hold of the dog until he had dragged him across the Styx, and then through the subterranean passage until he reached the opening in the upper world where he had commenced his descent into the lower regions.

No sooner had Cerberus arrived at this opening, and perceived the light of day, than he became frantic. He foamed at the mouth, and wherever the foam fell there grew venomous plants and foul weeds, which brought death upon any creature that ate of them. The Nightshade, so common a weed in most parts of the world, and which is a deadly poison, is one plant which the Ancients said sprang from the foam of Cerberus.

The appearance of Cerberus caused terror to every one who looked upon him, and Eurystheus no sooner saw him than he rushed into hiding. So Hercules took the dog back again, placed him in charge of Charon, who transported him across the dark river, and delivered him to Pluto.

This was the Twelfth and last Labour of Hercules, after which he was set at liberty.

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(r) THE END OF HERCULES.

His tasks being now ended, Hercules returned to Thebes. It was not, however, the will of his father that he should live an idle life, but that he should make use of the strength which had been given him, in punishing the wicked, protecting the weak, and succouring and helping those who were in trouble and distress.

For the rest of his days on earth he would have to labour, and above all, he must endeavour, not only to give proof of his bravery and valour (as he had already done), but show moral courage and restrain his angry passions. "Therefore," said Jupiter to him, "remain on the earth, take up thy work, and though it may be harder and more difficult than anything thou hast yet done, it will be far nobler. If thou failest, thou wilt have to bear the punishment; but if thou continuest a faithful servant to the end, thou shalt join the gods in Olympus, and be fully recompensed for all the troubles, the labours, and the sorrows thou hast passed through."

Hercules well knew that, if he had been desirous of doing so, he could have revenged himself upon Eurystheus for his unjust treatment of him, and the troubles he had had to endure, but he also knew that all these had been imposed upon him as a punishment. So he left Tiryns without doing the least harm to his hard taskmaster.

Hercules now travelled far and wide, seeking, wherever he could, to redress wrongs, to comfort those who were in trouble and sorrow, and to help the weak and afflicted, just as did the knights in later days. He went through many adventures, but we have not time to relate the whole of them.

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In one of these adventures a son of King *Eu'-ry-tus** came to beg the brave hero to help him in finding the cattle of his father which a cunning robber, named *Au-tol'-y-cus*,† had stolen. This Autolycus had the wonderful power of being able to change the appearance of everything that he stole, so that the person to whom it belonged was not able to recognize it again if he saw it.

Now Hercules fancied that this was only a ruse[1] of Eurytus to get him back again into his own country. He therefore became very angry, and thought it was a great piece of insolence for the king to demand any help from him. Unfortunately, he let his angry passions once more get the better of him, and, seizing the young man in his arms, threw him over the walls of the city with mighty force, so that when he fell to the ground he was dead.

Jupiter was so angry with his son for having allowed his ungovernable temper to again get the better of him, and for having used his immense strength in doing a wrong action (instead of curbing his passions and helping those who were in need of assistance), that he caused a violent fever to come upon him, and when it was at its height, Hercules lost his reason. The giant then rushed to the Oracle at Delphi to enquire how he could be freed from his grievous trouble.

But Apollo took no heed of his request, and gave no response to his enquiries. Hercules therefore seized the tripod[2] upon which the priestess used to sit when she delivered the answers of the gods, and would have destroyed the temple, but Apollo rushed out from the inner sanctuary, and drew his bow with the intention of shooting Hercules.

Jupiter now interposed. He hurled one of his thunderbolts between them, and commanded Apollo to speak through

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* Pronounce *û'-ri-tus*—*û* as in "pure"; *i* as in "pin"; *u* as in "us."

† „ *aw-tol'-i-kus*—*aw* as in "law"; *o* as in "tot"; *i* as in "pin"; *u* as in "us."

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the Oracle. Apollo obeyed the order of the Father of the gods, and said, that in order to cure his sickness, and fully recover his reason, Hercules must be sold as a slave and serve as such for three years.

The punishment was indeed hard, but Hercules understood that he must obey, and allowed himself to be sold to *Om'-pha-le*,* Queen of *Lyd'-i-a*.†[1] She made great fun of him, forced him to wear women's clothes, and sit with the maidens and spin. She took his lion's skin from him, and put it on herself. It is true she was not so wicked as Eurystheus, and did not impose upon him such heavy labours, but Hercules felt it a great degradation[2] to have to work about the house performing the ordinary duties of women; he, however, patiently obeyed, for he knew he deserved it.

At the expiration of the three years, Jupiter gave him another chance. Again Hercules took his lion's skin, returned to Greece, and assembled the Heroes and other warriors, in order to go and chastise King *La-om'-e-don*, founder and king of Troy. He was not able to destroy the immense walls which surrounded the city, for they had been built (as we have already learnt) by Apollo and Neptune, but he and the warriors with him scaled the walls, killed Laomedon, and took away his daughter, who was given as a wife to one of the friends of Hercules.

Hercules did not destroy the city of Troy, but made *Pri'-am*‡ its king.

Now Priam was the father of Paris, who stole away Helen, one of the most beautiful of women. This theft led to the Trojan war, which raged for ten years, for the purpose of recovering Helen. Homer tells the whole story in his great poem, *The Iliad*.

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* Pronounce *om'-fā-lē*—*o* as in "on"; *ā* as in "cat"; *ē* as in "me."
† „ *lĭd'-ĭ-a*—*ĭ* as in "lid"; *a* as in "sofa."
‡ „ *pri'-am*—*ī* as in "pride"; *a* as in "am."

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After this, Minerva invited Hercules to her country in what is now the fair land of Naples, near Mount Vesuvius. This land was inhabited by certain insolent and presumptuous giants, who had declared war against the gods. Minerva wished Hercules to fight for the gods; he did so, and they were at last completely victorious.

Jupiter lifted the island of Sicily and threw it on the king of the giants, so that he was buried under it, and was never able to rise again. The ancient Greeks said that the earthquakes which were (and still are) so frequently felt in Italy were caused by this king, who (in his efforts to escape from under the island, by lifting this burden which pressed so heavily upon him) shook the earth in that district.

Hercules' first wife had died, and he had since married the beautiful daughter of the king of *Cal'-y-don*,* and taken her away from her home to his own country. To reach this land they had to cross a broad river, which, on account of heavy rains, was now very much swollen, and they found no boat to ferry them over. Hercules forded the river quite easily, but a Centaur who lived near the bank, and who used frequently to carry people over on his back if they paid him sufficiently well, offered to carry Hercules' wife across from one bank to the other. His real intention was, however, to steal the woman and carry her to the mountains.

As soon as Hercules saw what he was going to do, he shot one of his arrows at him. This arrow had been dipped in the blood of the Hydra, and was poisoned. The Centaur received a mortal wound, but just before he died he told the wife of Hercules to collect some of the blood which was flowing from his body. If at any time she thought that her husband did not love her as he ought to do, she was to

* Pronounce *kal'-I-don*—*a* as in "cat"; *I* as in "lid"; *o* as in "don."

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take a few drops of this blood, pour it on his tunic[1] or some other garment which he wore, and she would then, for a certainty, regain her husband's affections.

This was only a wicked device of the Centaur in order that he might revenge himself, as we shall shortly see; but the woman believed him, and took the blood, saying nothing about it to her husband.

After further adventures Hercules went to reside at *Tra'-chin*,* a town of *Thes'-sa-ly*, in northern Greece, where he lived with his wife and children, and rested from his labours for a time. But the hero could not live an idle life. He constantly left his home to go to the relief of those who were suffering from oppression or wrong, for people came from far to ask his assistance. After one of these victorious expeditions he once more set off homeward.

But Hercules did not go directly to Trachin, because he wished to offer a sacrifice to the gods at the foot of *Mount Oe'-ta*,† as a thank-offering for his many victories. Oeta is in the south of Thessaly, and those who went there to offer a sacrifice were accustomed to dress themselves in white robes. As the clothes of Hercules were all soiled, he sent his servant to his wife to obtain some more suitable garments. Unfortunately, his wife remembered the advice given by the Centaur. She rubbed some of the blood on the tunic, and sent it back again to her husband.

Hercules, knowing nothing about the fatal effects which would result from wearing this garment, put it on. As soon as it became warm with the heat of his body, it clung to his skin, and the poison so burnt into his flesh that he suffered horrible agonies. He tried to tear the garment off, but the more he tried, the closer it adhered;

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* Pronounce *trā'-kin*—*ā* as in "trade"; *i* as in "kin."

† „ *ē'-ta*—*ē* as in "me"; *a* as in "cat."

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the poison penetrated deeply into his body, so that he suffered terrible torture.

Hercules now perceived that he should die. He therefore went into the forest, cut down some of the trees, and made with them a funeral pyre.*[1] Then he placed himself on the top and begged one of his young friends whom he loved much, to set fire to the faggots. The young man applied the torch, though his heart was full of grief. Hercules gave him his bow and arrows to be kept in remembrance of him. The fire blazed up fiercely, and a thick cloud descended from the sky (accompanied by thunderings and lightnings), and hid the pyre. In this cloud, Jupiter bore away the soul of Hercules to Olympus, and changed him into a god as a recompense for his noble deeds. When the fire had burnt out nothing remained but a few ashes.

So perished Hercules, the man who was fearless in time of danger, and equally courageous when duty called; who hated all wrong-doing, but who did not always conquer his own wayward temper.

These Tales of this mighty hero teach us all a lesson. Either we belong to that class who have noble aspirations, who do unselfish things, are brave when duty calls, pure in thought, word, and deed, and who love their neighbours as themselves; or we are cowardly, selfish, indulging in passionate feelings, greedy, treacherous, and untruthful.

Those who fight against the evil part of their nature and overcome it, are giants whose names will be honoured in all times and in all lands, and who will earn the lasting gratitude of those who know them and have benefited by their courage and virtues; whilst those who allow the worser part of their nature to gain the mastery will, like Eurystheus, only bring down upon themselves hatred and contempt.

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* Pronounce *pir*—i as in "pine."

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III.—THE STORY OF ORPHEUS* AND EURYDICE.†

In very early times, there lived in Thrace a most celebrated poet and singer, named Orpheus.

Thrace was a region in south-eastern Europe, extending northward far beyond the River Danube. It was inhabited by a vast number of different tribes, the people of whom were savage, cruel, and rapacious. They were all brave, and delighted in nothing so much as in war.

The Greeks founded many colonies[1] in this region, of which one of the most important was By-zan′-ti-um‡ (the modern Constantinople), and another the important port of Odessa on the Black Sea.

Orpheus was the son of the god A-pol′-lo, and of the muse Cal-li′-o-pe.§ Apollo, as you have already learnt, was the Sun-god, and was sometimes called Phoe′-bus A-pol′-lo. He was one of the greatest of the gods of Olympus, and was the leader of the Muses, and the god of music, poetry, and healing. From both his father and his mother, Orpheus inherited great personal beauty, and his mother endowed him[2] with all her wonderful gifts of poetry and song, for she was the Muse who had these gifts under her special care.

When he grew up, his father presented him with a lyre with golden strings, and he learnt to play upon it so skilfully and perfectly that nothing could withstand the charm of his music. When he sang his beautiful songs of love and happiness, all nature became silent and listened. The wild beasts forgot their fierceness, and gambolled after him like

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* Pronounce *ŏr′-fŭs*—*ŏ* as in "ore"; *ŭ* as in "use." Or three syllables, *ŏr′-fĭ-ŭs* -*ĭ* as in "fin"; *ŭ* as in "us."

† " *ū-rĭd′-ĭ-sē*—*ū* as in "use"; *ĭ* as in "rid"; *ē* as in "me."

‡ " *bĭ-zan′-shĭ-um*—*ĭ* as in "bit"; *a* as in "fan"; *u* as in "fun."

§ " *ka-lĭ′-ō-pē*—*a* as in "cat"; *ī* as in "line"; *ō* as in "no"; *ē* as in "me."

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a flock of lambs; the flowers bent forward as if to listen to the lovely strains of his music; the trees bowed down their heads as he passed along; the birds gathered round him, and even the fishes came to the banks of the streams to drink in the glad sounds. Men far and near talked of his fame, and all paid him the honour of a god.

As years passed by, the wonderful talents of Orpheus grew greater, and when at last he fell in love with the beautiful nymph Eu-ryd'-i-ce, she was so charmed by his great beauty and his wonderful gift of music, that she consented to become his bride.

They had been married only a short time when a very terrible accident happened to Eurydice. Whilst walking in the fields one bright morning in Spring, with the nymphs, her companions, she wandered away from them, and sat down on a bank of soft turf, under an aged oak. The summer breezes played with her long, golden hair, and she commenced weaving a garland of spring flowers to twine round her head. Looking up from her task she saw a shepherd youth, named Ar-is-tae'-us.* Struck with her beauty, he advanced towards her, but she, being alone, and afraid, fled from him. In her flight, she accidentally trod upon a deadly snake, coiled up in the long grass, which bit her in the heel.

Mortal skill could avail nothing; the beloved Eurydice died, and her spirit was conducted to the regions of Pluto, who ruled over the gloomy realms of the Nether-world.

Orpheus was broken-hearted. He wept for his dear wife, taken away in her youth and beauty, leaving the cheerful life, the pleasant days, and the happiness that she had shared with her husband, for the sunless abode of the lower world. She must cross that awful river, the Styx,† over

* Pronounce *ar-is-tē'-us*—*a* as in "ant"; *i* as in "is"; *ē* as in "tea"; *u* as in "us."

† „ as on *page 52*.

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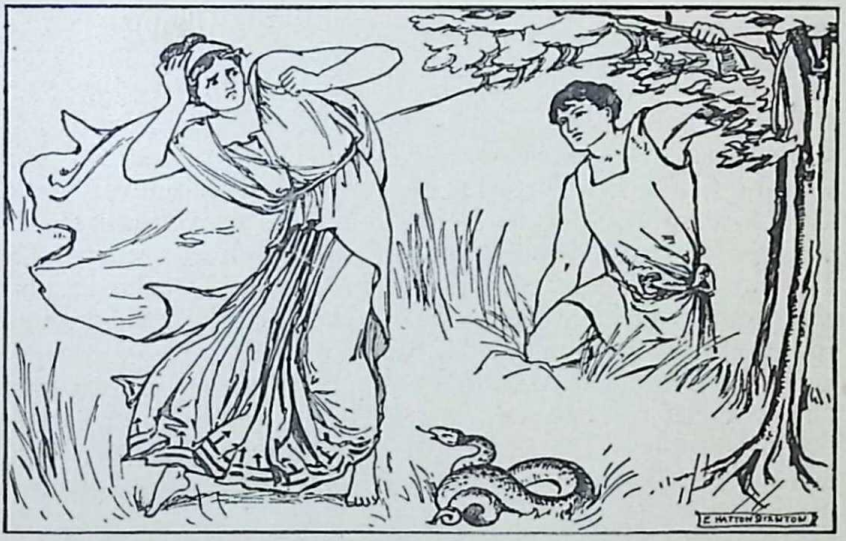
which there is no return, for the Fates[1] had cut the thread of her life.

Orpheus was so wretched that he could not play upon his golden lyre, nor open his lips to sing. For days and months he wandered through Hel'-las (as the country of Greece was then called), and dwelt amidst the wild mountains and the green glades. But after a time he turned to



'She accidentally trod upon a deadly snake.'—*p.* 62.

music to comfort him in his grief. His strains, however, were so plaintive[2] and sad, and the words he sang so mournful, that all Nature seemed to sympathize with him in his grief.

The beautiful sun cast a heavy cloud about him; the murmuring brook seemed to sigh in sympathy with him; the lovely flowers bent their heads low, and, as they bowed, they dropped, in grief, tears of crystal dew from their

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petals ;*[1] even the trees themselves took on a sad and sombre hue.

At length, finding no relief to his sadness, he resolved to seek his dear wife in the regions of the dead.

"I will find Eurydice," said he, "and either bring her back with me, or I will remain there. Better to dwell with her among the Shades,[2] than to live with others here in the light of the sun."

He therefore turned his steps towards Olympus, and, having reached the foot of the mountain, piteously implored Jupiter either to restore his wife to him, or to give him permission to go and seek her.

The heart of the great god was touched with compassion. He heard the lamentations of Orpheus, and was moved with pity by his great sorrow. He gave him leave, therefore, to go down into the lower regions, and sent Mercury, the wingèd messenger of the gods, to warn him that the undertaking was a most perilous one, and to guide him thither.

Not daunted in the least by the difficulties before him, Orpheus took his lyre in his hand, and hastened to the entrance of the Under-world. It was a cave, situated on the side of a steep promontory. No mortal had ever yet penetrated into the dark fastnesses of this dread region, but, guided by Mercury, Orpheus commenced the descent.

Whenever he struck his lyre in the midst of those dark and desolate regions, there came peace and calm. Crowds of the spirits of those who had departed gathered round the great singer, and marvelled at the sweetness of his music.

In due time he reached the portals[3] guarded by Cer'-be-rus, the terrible three-headed dog, who would allow no living being to enter, nor any spirit to pass out. The dog came to meet him, and began to snarl and growl as he

* Pronounce *pĕtalz*, not *pētalz*.

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crouched ready to spring upon him. But Orpheus had no fear. He touched his lyre and drew from it such exquisite music that the dog was appeased, and quietly licked his feet and let him pass through the great gate, which opened into Pluto's dark kingdom.

Onward he went, full of love, playing and singing, and the magic sounds penetrated to the remotest depths of the Nether-world.

At last he reached the throne of Pluto. There the king of the Shades sat with his wife, Per-seph'-o-ne,* beside him, and the relentless Fates, in whose hands are the destinies of all mortals, sat at his feet. Orpheus struck his lyre with all the power and skill of which he was capable, and poured forth the sorrow of his heart, praying Pluto to have pity on him.

"I come," said he," to seek my wife, whom the poisonous fang of a deadly serpent has brought to an untimely end. I implore you, unite again the thread of Eurydice's life. We must all, sooner or later, pass to your domain, and my loved one, when she has filled her term of life, will be yours. But till then, grant her to me, I beseech you. If you deny me this, I cannot return alone, and you shall triumph in the death of both of us."

So sad was this song, and so beautiful the music to it, that the king and queen of the Shades were moved to tears, and Pluto consented to restore Eurydice to the earth, and to her husband's care, but upon one condition only.

"Take thy wife again," he said. "Thou alone hast, of all mortals, dared to visit my realms. Take her, and return to the bright world above. But I make one stipulation.[1] If thou shalt look back on her as she follows thee, until ye have both crossed the threshold into the outer world, she shall return to me, and abide with me for ever.

* Pronounce as on *page* 53.

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Thou art warned; if thou neglect my admonition,[1] thou wilt lose her for ever."

Orpheus joyfully accepted the condition, and Eurydice, limping on her wounded foot, was called and told to follow her husband. Happy in the thought of being reunited to his loved one, Orpheus eagerly began his journey back to earth, and the two ascended the steep and gloomy path, he leading and she following; and as he retraced his steps he looked neither to the right hand nor to the left, but ever straight before him. In total silence they passed up the dark passage, and from time to time he strained his ears to catch some rustle of the garments of his wife, or some hint that she was behind him, so anxious was he to be certain that Eurydice was still following.

They had nearly reached the outlet into the bright upper world, when Orpheus, in his great love for his wife, and the longing to look upon her dear face to assure himself that she was still following, looked round.

Instantly Eurydice was caught back, and, as they stretched out their arms to embrace each other, they grasped only the air, and Orpheus beheld the vanishing form of his wife as she was borne from his affrighted eyes back to the realms below.

"Farewell!" she said, "a last and fond farewell!" Gradually the voice of his loved one was lost to his attentive ears. All was over now. He had tried and failed, and no hope remained.

But 'hope springs eternal in the human breast.'[2] Orpheus resolved to get permission to try once more to regain his dear wife, but the grim old boatman, Charon, who ferries the Shades over the river Styx, repulsed him and refused to take him across. For seven days he lingered near the banks of the stream, neither eating nor sleeping, but in vain.

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Henceforth Orpheus wandered disconsolately[1] over the earth, avoiding all human society, and often retiring to the solitudes of the forest, playing, as Milton[2] says,—

> "Such strains as would have won the ear
> Of Pluto, to have quite set free
> His half-regained Eurydice."

But he could find no solace to his grief, which was more intense than before. At times he thought he could discern his loved one wandering alone in the distance, with a mournful expression such as he had caught a glimpse of when she passed back again into the darkness of the Under-world.

On one of the feast days of Bacchus, a number of the merry-making maidens met him in the forest and begged him to play them some sprightly music that they might have a dance. But his heart was too full of grief to comply with their request, and he could only retire from among them, and play doleful and pathetic melodies.

"Ah," said one of the maidens, pointing to him, "See how he despises us," and she threw her javelin at him. As soon as the weapon came within sound of his lyre, it fell harmless at his feet, and the stones which others of them hurled at him also did him no harm.

Then the women raised loud shouts, which completely drowned the sound of his lyre, and rushed upon him like furies. They tore him limb from limb, and cast his head and lyre into the river. As the lyre floated down the stream it murmured sad music, to which the banks responded in plaintive strains, and every now and then the singer's head was heard to murmur in soft tones, "Eurydice! Eurydice!" for even in death he could not forget his loved one. Thus he called incessantly upon her, until the trees, the brooks, and the fountains caught up the despairing cry, and repeated it over and over again.

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The Muses gathered up the fragments of his body, and buried them on the slopes of Mount Olympus, where the nightingale warbled a funeral dirge over his grave, and where it is now said to sing more sweetly than in any other part of Greece, and so the nightingale is the bird of Orpheus. His lyre was placed by Jupiter in the heavens among the stars, as the constellation Lyra.[1]

After his death, the Shade of the bard passed a second time into the Under-world. There Orpheus rejoined Eurydice, and together they roam the happy fields,[2] he sometimes leading, sometimes she; and he can now gaze upon the dear face of the one he had lost without incurring a penalty for a thoughtless glance.

IV.—CUPID AND PSY'-CHE.*

The ancient Greeks told many charming tales respecting *Venus*, the goddess of Beauty, of Love, of Laughter, and of Marriage, who, you will remember, was said to have sprung from the foam of the sea.

The *Ne'-re-ids*,† or Sea-nymphs, first discovered her floating as a tiny infant on the crest of a wave. They took her down to their coral caves in the depths of the sea, and there nursed her with the tenderest care. In due time, when she was grown up, they carried her up to the surface of the sea, when *Zeph'-y-rus*, the gentle west wind, wafted her to the Island of *Cy'-prus*.[3] Here the three fair maidens, the *Seasons*,[4] received her, decked her with lovely garments, put a wreath of gold round her head, a glittering chain round her neck, and escorted her, thus arrayed, to *O-lym'-pus*, where she was received by the admiring gods and goddesses

* Pronounce *sī'-kē*—ī as in "side"; ē as in "key."
† " *nē'-rī-idz*—ē as in "me"; ī as in "rid."

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with the greatest enthusiasm on account of her marvellous beauty.

In due time she was married to *Vul'-can*, the god of the Forge, who, however, was ugly and deformed, awkward in his movements, and limping in his gait.[1]

She had many children. One of her sons was Cupid, the mischief-making little god of Love. He is always pictured as having wings, and being armed with a bow and arrows, with which he shot darts of desire into the bosoms both of gods and men, and still does the same.

Venus was not a good and true wife, and after a while she deserted her husband.

At this time there lived a certain king and queen who had three daughters, all of whom were greatly renowned for their beauty, but the youngest was the fairest and most beautiful of them all. She was called *Psy'-che*,[2] from the Greek word which means breath, spirit, life, and soul, and also a butterfly or moth, as the symbol of the soul.

Psyche was so lovely that everyone said *she* ought to be goddess of Beauty, and her fame spread far and wide over all lands, till people began to pay her that homage[3] which was due only to Venus herself. As she passed along the road the people sang her praises, and strewed her path with flowers. They no longer paid their devotions to Venus, so that the latter became very angry, and made up her mind that she would soon show how unwise it was for anyone to usurp honours which were due to her alone. Venus, therefore, called her winged son, Cupid, and, pointing out Psyche to him, said, "My dear boy, punish that haughty girl, and make her fall in love with some low, worthless being."

Cupid at once prepared to do as his mother bade him. He took his bow and arrows, and went into the garden where there were two fountains. The water of one was pure

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and sweet, and that of the other bitter and poisonous. Cupid filled two small amber[1] vases, one from each fountain, and hung them from the top of his quiver.

He then hastened to the palace, which he reached at night-fall. He crept stealthily past the sleeping guards, and at last reached the chamber where he found Psyche fast asleep. Noiselessly approaching her bed, he bent over her, shed a few drops of the poisonous water upon her lips, and touched her side with the point of one of his arrows. As he did so, a ray of moonlight shone into the room and showed how wonderfully beautiful Psyche was. In his surprise Cupid started back, and one of his own arrows scratched his flesh and inflicted a wound from which he suffered for many years.

Heedless of this wound, his only thought was to repair the mischief he had done, and he now poured a few drops of the sweet water over her golden ringlets. Then he crept out of the room as noiselessly as he had entered it, vowing to himself that he would never harm such innocent beauty.

From this time Psyche was frowned upon by Venus, so that, instead of having many suitors for her hand, no one came to demand her in marriage, though everyone spoke her praises. Her two elder sisters had, by the aid of Venus, been long married to two royal princes.

Psyche became very unhappy, for Venus began to persecute her with all kinds of petty annoyances, so that she felt inclined to put an end to her life.

Her parents were anxious, however, that she should be married. They were afraid that, by some mischance, they must have incurred the anger of the gods, so the king, her father, consulted the oracle of Apollo as to what he should do. The oracle answered that Psyche must be taken to the top of a high mountain, and there left, to see what would happen.

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Everyone felt very grieved at this decree of the oracle, but Psyche said, "My dear parents, do not lament for me, I submit to the decree. Lead me to the rock which unhappy fate has destined for me."

Her father, her mother, and all the people formed a procession, taking the maid with them. They went, not with songs and music as though she were a bride, but more as though it were a funeral procession, amidst the most sorrowful lamentations.

When they reached the rugged summit they left Psyche alone, and with sad hearts returned home. At the top of this mountain was a great precipice, and in her sorrow and despair Psyche determined to cast herself down, expecting to be dashed to pieces. But Cupid, who had seen that all these sad things were brought about by his mother's persecution, had followed Psyche all unseen by her, and had begged the gentle west wind, Zephyrus, to catch the maiden in his arms, and carry her away. Zephyrus did so, and bore her with easy motion to a beautiful valley, and there laid her down amidst the flowers.

Here she slept until the next day; but when the morning's sun shone upon her, she slowly rose to her feet, rubbed her eyes to make sure that she was not dreaming, and in a half bewildered way began to stroll about amongst the pleasant groves and stately trees.

Presently she came to a beautiful palace near a fountain of bright, crystal water. She entered, and everything she saw filled her with pleasure and amazement. The building was of gold and ivory, and magnificent carvings and pictures were found everywhere. Whilst she was wandering from room to room and marvelling at the richness and beauty of everything she saw, an invisible voice addressed her.

"Lady, all that thou beholdest is thine. We, whose voices thou dost hear, are thy servants. Retire, we pray

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thee, to thy chamber, repose on thy bed of down, and, when it may please thee, repair to the bath. Food awaits thee in the adjoining alcove.[1] We will bring thee whatever thou desirest."

Psyche entered the banqueting hall. Costly dainties of food and nectar,[2] the drink of the gods, were offered to her. Her ears were feasted with music from invisible performers, and amidst these enchanting surroundings she fell asleep.

Then her destined husband approached, and touching her gently while she slept, declared that she was to be his bride, saying, "I am to be thy husband; seek not to look upon my face, or to enquire my name; shouldst thou do so, evil will befall thee." When morning dawned, her husband had vanished. He came only in the hours of darkness, and departed with the dawn of day.

One day passed like another. Night by night the sweet tones of her unseen husband's voice were a solace to Psyche in her loneliness.

Though she had solemnly promised never to endeavour to catch a glimpse of the face of her unseen visitor, she often begged him to stay and let her see him, but he would not consent.

"Why should you wish to see my face?" said he. "Do you doubt me? Have you any wish which is not gratified?" But, though Psyche was happy, she found the days to pass somewhat slowly and monotonously, and she wished that she could see her sorrowing parents, or receive a visit from her sisters.

The yearning to see some one from home became greater and greater, and she entreated and coaxed her husband till at last she induced him to comply with her wishes and allow her relations to visit her, for, as the days passed on, the hours seemed interminable, spent as they were in complete solitude.

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The next morning, Zephyrus, obedient to Cupid's commands, brought her sisters across the mountains and down into the valley to see Psyche. They embraced her, and she returned their caresses with rapture.

"Come!" said Psyche, "come into my palace and refresh yourselves, and then we will settle down to enjoy a long talk together."

Then, taking her two sisters by the hand, Psyche committed them to the care of her attendants, and, after they had refreshed themselves in her bath and then at her table, she began to show them all her treasures. She related how she had wished to cast herself down from the high rock and commit suicide; how she had been preserved from such a frightful death, as by a miracle; how she had reached the enchanted palace, and how, night by night, her mysterious visitor came and left her ere the morning's sun showed his bright beams in the eastern sky.

Now Psyche's two elder sisters had always been jealous of her beauty, and when they beheld all her luxurious surroundings, the sight of so much splendour made them more envious than ever, and they determined to put an end to her happiness.

That same night, when her unknown husband returned, he warned her against her envious sisters, and told her that on no account must she let them persuade her to try to find out who he was.

The next day, the two jealous sisters began to question Psyche. "Who is your husband who comes every night? What is he like? Where does he come from?" and so envious were they that they tried, by every means they could, to convince Psyche that her husband must be some monster, so hideous that he durst not let her see him, lest she should loathe him.

"Alas!" said they, "we are deeply sorry for your lot.

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Your unseen husband is no doubt a frightful dragon whom the peasants and hunters from the neighbouring forest have seen diving into the river, and such a monster will surely devour you in time."

At last, her sisters' insidious[1] words filled Psyche with great anxiety, so that, when they next spoke to her on the matter, she listened with a ready ear to them.

"Take our advice," said they, "conceal a lamp and a dagger in your apartment. When your husband is sound asleep on his bed, bring forth your lamp and you will then see the hideous form and distorted countenance of the monster who has deceived you. If what we say is true, do not hesitate for a moment, but take the dagger, cut off his head, and recover your liberty."

Psyche was unable to resist these persuasive words, and the next day, when her sisters had gone home, her curiosity quite overcame her.

That night, while her unknown husband was fast asleep, she rose silently from her bed. In great agitation she seized her dagger, noiselessly lighted her lamp, and cautiously approached the couch where the sleeping one was reposing. But when the light fell upon the face and form of the sleeper, she beheld, not the hideous monster she expected to see, but the most beautiful and charming of the gods. His curling, golden hair fell over his forehead, delicate wings sprang from his shoulders, and, by his bow and quiver of arrows, which lay on the floor beside the bed, she recognized who he was.

Her heart beat with joy and pride as she gazed on the graceful Cupid, and she was full of deep sadness that she had doubted him. In her joy she forgot to be cautious, and a drop of hot oil from the lamp fell upon his naked shoulder. The sudden pain startled him; he opened his eyes, and the dagger in Psyche's trembling hand and the lighted lamp told him at once the story of her doubt.

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Without saying a word he rose from his couch, spread his wings, flew out at the open window, and soared to the top of a tall cypress tree.[1] As he left the window she grasped his right foot, and was raised with him high in the air, but she then fell to the ground at the base of the palace wall.

As she lay crouching in the dust, Cupid reproached her. "O foolish Psyche, thus do you repay me! I came down from high Olympus to wed thee, and now thou wouldst have slain me. I bade thee beware of thy foolish sisters, but thou hast preferred their advice to mine. They shall be richly punished, but for thee, it is sufficient that I leave thee for ever. Love cannot dwell along with suspicion."

Thus speaking, Cupid vanished, and Psyche burst forth into violent lamentations, and would have drowned herself in the stream which ran through the garden, had not the river-god had pity on her, borne her gently on, and cast her back on the flowery banks.

On the side of the stream sat *Pan*, the god of the Shepherds, who tried to comfort her.

"Fair maiden," said he, "I will give thee good advice. Do not wander about disconsolate, nor attempt suicide, but go out into the world; seek the lost one, and win his love once more by service."

She wandered on her way in search of her husband, but was unable to find him, because he had hid himself in his mother's chamber.

Her two sisters soon learnt the whole story of her misfortune, and pretended that they were deeply sorry at the sad things which had happened to her. But there was really no sorrow in the breasts of these spiteful and envious creatures. They were inwardly rejoicing. "For now," said they one to the other, "the god will perhaps choose one of us."

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Therefore, without saying a word to anyone, they rose early the next morning, wended their way to the high mountain from whence Psyche had been carried by the gentle west wind, and having reached the top, they called upon Zephyrus to bear them away. In their excitement they did not notice that another wind was blowing, and leaping from the precipice, they were dashed to pieces at its foot.

While Cupid was lying sick in the house of his mother, *Aph-ro-di'-te,** and mourning for Psyche, she learnt the cause of her son's sorrow. It filled her with the deepest wrath, for, as you will remember, she long before had resolved to destroy Psyche.

In the meantime, Psyche continued her wanderings in search of her husband, and suffered every imaginable torment. After she had left *Pan*, the god of the Shepherds, she met *Ce'-res*, the protectress of Agriculture and of the fruits of the earth, and *Ju'-no*, the protectress of all women, and implored them to help her to find her loved one; but in vain, none of them could give her any assistance.

At last, wearied with her searchings, and finding no repose, she determined to go to *Venus*, the goddess of Beauty, and enter her service, hoping by her modesty and submission to win the favour of the goddess, and that she would then help her to find her lost one.

Venus received her very angrily, but took her into her service. She was an exacting mistress, and gave the poor girl such difficult tasks that she would never have been able to accomplish them had not the beasts and the insects, who loved Psyche dearly, assisted her.

In many ways Venus tested her fidelity and her endurance. One day, she ordered Psyche to be taken to the storehouse of her temple. Here was an immense quantity of

* Pronounce *af-ro-di'-tē*—*a* as in "after"; *o* as in "rode"; *i* as in "dive"; *ē* as in "tea."

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wheat, barley, poppy seeds, peas, lentils,[1] and beans, the food for her pigeons, mixed in an inextricable[2] heap.

"See," said the goddess, "here is your day's task; separate all these grains, putting every one of the same kind in a heap by itself. Before the evening's sun sinks to rest, this work must be completed."

Psyche sat down silent and full of consternation at the enormous task; but, while she sat in this despairing mood, Cupid caused the little ants in the field to take pity upon her. The leader of the ants, followed by an immense number of his subjects, approached the heap; then, taking the seeds grain by grain with the utmost diligence, they separated the pile, sorting each kind into a separate heap, and when this was accomplished they vanished out of sight.

As evening was closing in, Venus returned from a banquet of the gods, and, seeing that Psyche's task was finished, said, "Oh, you wicked one! this is not your work, but that of the one whom you have deceived." Thus saying, she threw a piece of black bread to Psyche for her supper, and went away.

Next morning, Venus called Psyche before her and said, "Yonder is the river, and beyond it is a grove where you will find sheep feeding without a shepherd, each with a bright, golden fleece on its back. Go, bring me a sample of that precious wool from every one of those fleeces."

Psyche set off obediently to execute the task Venus had given her. But the river-god had moved the wind, and made a sweet melody amongst the rushes, which said to the disconsolate maiden as she went along, "Oh, Psyche, attempt not the dangerous flood, nor venture among the sheep on the bank while the sun is high in the heavens, for they are then fierce. But when evening comes thou mayst cross the river in safety, and thou wilt find pieces of the golden wool hanging on the bushes and thickets; gather them."

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Psyche did as she was commanded, and when the evening sun was sinking, she returned to Venus with her arms full of the golden fleeces. But her hard-hearted mistress gave her no kind words. "This is not your doing, I know well," said she. "I have another task for you. Take this box, and go down to the Under-world to *Pros'-er-pine*,* *Pluto's*[1] wife, and say to her, 'My mistress desires you to send her a little of your ointment.'"

Now this ointment had wonderful properties. When any persons had lost their beauty, either by sickness or weariness, or from any other cause, if they were anointed with but a little of it, their beauty returned.

Venus was anxious to use a little of it on herself, for, in tending her sick son, traces of weariness had appeared on her face, and her brow was somewhat wrinkled.

Poor Psyche now felt that her end was come. But *Zephyrus*, her old friend, directed her how she might reach the realms of *Plu'-to* in the Under-world; how to avoid all the dangers of the dread road; how to escape the savage three-headed dog *Cer'-ber-us*, and how she might prevail on *Cha'-ron*, the ferry-man, to row her across the river *Styx*, and bring her safely back again. "But beware," said Zephyrus, "when Proserpine gives you the ointment, not to let your curiosity overcome your prudence; you must not open the box."

In due time Psyche reached the realms of Pluto. She was admitted into the palace, but though Proserpine invited her to a seat at the banquet after she had delivered her message from Venus, she declined, and was contented with coarse bread for her supper.

Presently the box containing the precious ointment was given to her, and very glad she was to wend her way back again to the light of day.

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* Pronounce as Note, *page* 53.

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She had nearly reached the Upper-world when a thought suddenly seized her. "Why might not *I* take a little of the magic preparation, and rub it on my own forehead? It will efface all traces of the many sleepless nights and the anxious days I have passed, and the innumerable tears I have shed. Besides," thought she, "if I have erased all traces of grief and sorrow from my cheeks, my beloved one will love me all the more when I find him."

The maiden gently raised the lid of the box; but alas, she saw nothing therein to give beauty. A strange and invisible spirit, the spirit of *Sleep*, rushed out of the box and took possession of the maiden, and she fell down by the side of the road in a sleep like that of death.

But Cupid, who was now quite recovered from his wound, and was just as anxious at the absence of Psyche, and eager to find her as she was to find him, quietly slipped away from his chamber and flew to the spot where Psyche lay in her deep sleep. He shook her; and with the touch of one of his arrows, woke her.

"Alas! dear maiden," said he, "thou hadst almost perished again, but complete the task imposed upon thee by my mother, and I will seek *Ju'-pi-ter* and intercede with him for us." He then took his flight like swift lightning, and presented himself before Jupiter, whilst Psyche returned to Aphrodite with the ointment she had brought from the Under-world.

Jupiter lent a favouring ear to Cupid's pleading. He called all the gods to a meeting, at which Psyche was to be recognized as the lawful wife of Cupid, and Venus (or Aphrodite, as she was also called) acquiesced. Sending his messenger, *Mercury*, Psyche was brought to Olympus, and when she arrived there Jupiter handed her a cup of ambrosia,[1] saying to her, "Drink! Psyche, and be immortal. Thou and Cupid shalt never again be separated."

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The re-union of the long separated dear ones was celebrated by a festive banquet. Venus forgot all her former envy, and welcomed the united pair, who were now come to the end of all their troubles and unhappiness.

V.—ATALANTA'S RACE.

To the north-east of the Gulf of Corinth, in Greece, was a large district, ruled over by a king and queen who had no children. This was a great trouble to them, and they earnestly prayed the gods to send them a son.

In due time a daughter was born to them, instead of the longed-for son. The parents were very greatly disappointed, especially the father. He was so angry that he ordered his servants to take the little babe away to a mountain far distant from his kingdom, and there leave it to die, either of cold or hunger, or to be devoured by the wild beasts.

A few days after the little one had been left, some hunters passing that way found her alive. They were surprised to see a she-bear watching over her. The cubs of this bear had been killed some days before by the hunters, and, as she wandered where the little babe lay crying, a mother's feelings were aroused in her savage breast. The huge creature lay down by the side of the little one and suckled her, shielding her from the cold and from all harm, and thus the hunters found the child happy, and void of all fear. Full of sympathy and compassion for her, they took her to their home. She lived with them until she was grown up, and they gave her the name of *At-a-lan'-ta*.* Whenever they went hunting they took her with them, and she soon became very clever in tracking on foot the wild beasts, and expert either in spearing them or in shooting them with her bow and arrows.

* Pronounce *at-a-lan'-ta*—all the *a*'s short as in "at."

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As the years went by, she grew into a tall and beautiful maiden. One day she joined the hunters in pursuit of a wild boar of prodigious size and extraordinary strength, which destroyed the springing grain, wasted the fields, and threatened the inhabitants with famine and death. They chased the animal from one end of the forest to the other, and Atalanta, who was as swift of foot as she was skilful with her weapons, brought it to bay, and succeeded in inflicting upon it a mortal wound.

After this great feat she returned to the palace of her father and mother. They received her with great joy, and entreated her to marry. But the maiden had been warned by the Oracle that, if she married, she would not be happy, so to all her suitors (ot whom she had many) she made one answer.

"I will be the prize of him only who can conquer me in the race; but if anyone is unsuccessful, death will be the forfeit for his failure.'

Now though the damsel was known to have excelled the swiftest men in the test of speed, many men, who were fleet of foot, tried to win her. None of them succeeded, and numbers refrained from pressing their suit when they heard the hard conditions which she imposed upon those who were rash enough to contend for her hand.

At last a young man called *Mi-la'-ni-on** (or, according to some of the writers, *Hip-pom'-e-nes*)† determined to make trial. Now Milanion was high in favour with Venus, and she had promised that she would help him. For this purpose she gave him three golden apples from the garden of her temple in the island of Cyprus, and instructed him how he was to use them in the race, so as to enable him to win.

The two contestants came on the course, and Atalanta

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* Pronounce *mī-lā'-nī-on*—*ī* as in "mine"; *ā* as in "lady"; *i* as in "pin"; *o* as in "on."

† „ *hip-pom'-e-nēz*—*i* as in "hip"; *o* as in "pomp"; *e* as in "eclipse"; *ē* as in "me."

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looked more beautiful than ever. The trumpets gave the signal to prepare for the race, and as she sped onwards to the starting-place, the gentle breeze appeared to give wings to her feet; her fair hair hanging over her shoulders flew behind her; and, as she tucked up her garments so that she might not be impeded by them, she was indeed a vision of beauty.

Atalanta always gave her competitors a good start, and never failed to get up with them. On the signal being again sounded, Milanion rushed forward at his highest speed, and, like the maiden, he seemed to skim the surface of the ground with his nimble feet. The populace[1] watching the contest loudly applauded the youth to give him courage, and urged him on. "Speed thyself!" said they. "Make haste! Now use thy strength! Away! away! thou shalt be conqueror!"

As he felt Atalanta gaining upon him, and heard her close behind, he cast one of the golden apples on the ground almost at her feet. She saw the rolling gold glitter in the grass, and paused to pick it up. This momentary delay allowed Milanion to gain a little, but she soon overtook him, and as he heard her coming near to him again, he threw down the second apple.

Atalanta stopped once more and picked up the golden jewel, and this second delay gave her adversary a good advantage, so that he was now some distance in front of her.

But the maiden ran so swiftly that she again soon overtook him. The goal was in sight, and Atalanta would easily have reached it first, and so have beaten her suitor, had he not thrown down the third apple, somewhat to one side of the course. The maiden seemed in doubt whether she should take up this third golden treasure, but the temptation was too great. She paused once more to secure the prize, and Milanion outran her, and so won the race.

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Atalanta could no longer refuse her suitor. She, therefore, kept her promise, and became his wife. They loved one another truly, and Atalanta never regretted that she had paused to pick up the golden apples, and by this means secured so dear a husband.

But the Oracle which said that if she ever married she would be unhappy had to be fulfilled. In their joy and happiness, the newly-married ones forgot to thank Venus for what she had done for them, and the goddess was greatly provoked at their ingratitude.

As a punishment, she placed them in the power of *Cyb'-e-le*,*[1] the goddess of the Earth, who turned them into a lion and lioness, and yoked them to her car, which they were doomed evermore to drag.

The poet, Walter Savage Landor,[2] thus describes the race :—

They both started: he, by one stride, first,
For she half pitied him, so beautiful,
Running to meet his death, yet was resolved
To conquer. Soon she near'd him, and he felt
The rapid and repeated gush of breath
Behind his shoulder.
From his hand now dropt
A golden apple: she look'd down and saw
A glitter on the grass, yet on she ran.
He dropt a second; now she seem'd to stoop:
He dropt a third; and now she stoopt indeed:
Yet, swifter than a wren picks up a grain
Of millet, rais'd her head: it was too late,
Only one step, only one breath, too late.
Hippomenes had touch'd the maple goal[3]
With but two fingers, leaning pronely forth.[4]
She stood in mute despair;[5] the prize was won.

* Pronounce *sīb'-e-lē*—*i* as in "sin"; *e* as in "eclipse"; *ē* as in "leap."

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VI.—THE LOTOS-EATERS.

There once lived in Greece a king called *Men-e-la'-us*,* who had a very beautiful wife, named *Helen*. One day, a prince called *Paris*, the son of *Pri'-am*,† King of Troy, came to see Menelaus, who welcomed him very heartily. But the prince repaid his host in a disgraceful manner, for he carried off much of the king's treasure, and worse than that, he took away his beautiful wife.

This naturally made Menelaus very angry, and he at once called upon his many friends to help him to recover his wife and treasure, and to be revenged upon Paris. Amongst these was *U-lys'-ses*,[1] King of *Ith'-a-ca*, one of the I-o'-ni-an Islands.[2] He, with many more brave men, set sail and came to Troy. But the Greeks did not find the task of conquering Troy by any means an easy one, and it took them ten years before they captured the city.

When at length Troy fell into the hands of its enemies, and *Hec'-tor*, the brave son of Priam, was dead, the king himself slain, the women sold as slaves, and only a heap of ruins remained to mark where Troy had been, the chiefs set sail for their different homes.

No one was more glad than Ulysses, for he had left at home his wife *Pe-nel'-o-pe*‡ and a dear little son who was only an infant when he went away to fight in the war in which he had really so little interest.

He loaded his ships with the spoils of the city, and embarked with his men, and with a favouring breeze they sped on their way homewards. But a frightful hurricane arose. The wind drove the ships madly through the waves,

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* Pronounce *mĕn-e-lā'-us*—*ĕ* as in "men"; *e* as in "eclipse"; *ā* as in "late"; *u* as in "us."

† „ *pri'-am*—*i* as in "pride"; *a* as in "am."

‡ „ *pĕ-nel'-o-pē*—*ĕ* as in "her"; *e* as in "pen"; *o* as in "not"; *ē* as in "peel."

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flying clouds blotted out from their view the sun by day and the stars by night, and the vessels, with torn sails and broken masts, were driven far out of their course. After ten days, they touched on an unknown shore, the home of the Lotos-eaters.

The land which Homer, the famous Greek poet, here calls Lotos-land, was probably on the north coast of Africa, perhaps the country we now call Trip′-o-li.

The *lotos* was a mythical plant, and we cannot say what Homer means by it, for the Greeks gave this name to many different plants, some of which were shrubs, some trees, and others water-lilies. Of this latter there are several beautiful kinds, the flowers having a fragrant smell, and the root (like an onion) being eaten as a vegetable.

The date-palm is one kind of lotos, but the lotos (or as it is sometimes spelt, lotus) of to-day is an African plant. It is a low, thorny bush, and its fruit is a kind of ju-jube, about the size of a small plum.

Lotos-land was a fair country. There were green hills and wooded valleys, and streams that ran with a gentle murmur down to the sea. The men were rejoiced, after their long battling with the tempestuous wind and waves, to have reached so lovely a land, a land which none of them had ever seen before. The sun shone brightly in the blue sky; birds of rich plumage and with sweet voices flitted round about them; delicious fruits of every kind hung on the trees; flowers of the loveliest hues grew everywhere; and the gentle breeze brought with it the scent of a thousand blossoms.

"Now," said the companions of Ulysses, "we have fought long enough with the rough sea. Here let us rest for a while. Let us gather the ripe fruits, and bathe in the limpid waters, and sleep in the pleasant woods. Then, when we are rested, we will once more spread our sails to the wind, and hasten on our way to Ithaca."

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But Ulysses was anxious to get home. "Nay, my men," said he, "it is a far distance from hence to the island whither we are bound. Better to gird up our loins[1] now, and rest afterwards. These pleasant woods may be full of evil beasts, and the men who dwell in them may be wild and inhospitable. Let us not delay any longer."

But his companions would not listen to the voice of their leader. "Always danger, always labour," said they. "Our sinews are not of steel, nor our hearts of brass. We are but mortal men. A little rest will refresh and strengthen us, and we shall then be able to battle once more with the fierce billows of the ocean, and reach our home with joy."

Ulysses, on finding that his followers were unwilling to proceed until they had rested, sent three of his best men on shore to spy out the land and discover who the inhabitants were. They had not gone far before they perceived some of the natives seated under the lotos-trees, and banqueting on their sweet fruit. These men entertained them very kindly, and gave them some of their food to eat. But no sooner had they partaken of it than the three men lost all thought of home, and all recollection of their waiting companions. A dreamy, languid sensation[2] came over them, and their only wish was to stay for ever in Lotos-land.

The fruit of the lotos-tree was very beautiful and delightful to the taste, and the feeling which the eating of the blossoms and of the fruit produced is thus expressed by Homer in the Odyssey[3]—that splendid poem, written in Greek, in which he tells of the wanderings of Ulysses.

"Whoever tasted once of that sweet food
Wished not to see his native country more,
Nor give his friends the knowledge of his fate.
And then my messengers desired to dwell
Among the Lotos-eaters, and to feed
Upon the lotos, never to return."

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Ulysses waited impatiently for some time on the sea-shore for the return of the men who had been sent to reconnoitre. He was afraid lest some wild beast had attacked them, or some serious accident had befallen them.

As he gazed out to the horizon, longing for his far-away home, and then to the land where his companions were loitering, a young man stood before him. Ulysses recognized, by the 'ca-du'-ce-us' which he carried in his hand, and by the wings on his shoulders and his feet, that it was *Mercury*, the messenger of the gods.

"I am come to thee," he said, "as a herald. *Min-er'-va* has sent me to thee to warn thee. Wander if thou wilt through this delightful land, but when thou dost see the sweet lotos, beware! and eat it not. If thou taste its juicy leaves and fruit, thou wilt become another man. The remembrance of the joys of home, the love of thy wife, and the dear child longing for thy return will leave thee, and thy heart will cleave to this place. Thy vessel will rot in the sea; thy oars will moulder on the shore; and thou, too, wilt become a lotos-eater, and wilt pass thy days amongst the dreamy people of this land." So saying, Mercury departed.

Ulysses now called together twelve of the bravest of his companions, and told them of the message. "Let us hasten," said he, "go east, west, north, and south in search of our brethren who are delaying their return."

They set out at once; but some of those who went with him laughed at the strange message; some believed it, but they disregarded it. They plucked the lotos from its river bed; they ate its pleasant leaves and its delicious fruit, and as they ate, a new spirit came upon them, and they said, "What is Ithaca? Here are fairer hills; here are brighter flowers, and here grows the rich, sweet lotos. Others may return if they will, but we will abide here."

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Then great fear fell upon Ulysses, but he had still a small band of men who had not tasted the dreamy plant, though they had been sorely tempted.

They therefore girded themselves to the task of finding their lost companions. But instead of coming upon them in chains, or mangled by fierce beasts, as they feared, they found them lying half asleep with some of the lotos fruit in their hands. They held out the tempting food to them, and urged them to partake of it.

Ulysses and his men had brought ropes and thongs with them. They drew their swords, and rushed on the dreamy band of Lotos-eaters. Some they bound, some they scourged, some they carried away by main force, and against their will hurried them down to the beach, and never left them till they had forced them up the ship's side, and secured them in the hold. The ship-men now seized their oars, spread their swelling sails to the wind, left the enchanted island behind, and went bounding over the dark waters towards Ithaca, which they reached after many startling and dangerous adventures.

The poet Tennyson,[1] in his poem *The Lotos-Eaters*, gives a wonderful description of the effect of the magic plant and the weary disgust with life which the eating of it produces.

> And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
> Of child, of wife, and slave; but evermore
> Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
> Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.[2]
> Then some one said, 'We will return no more;'
> And all at once they sang, 'Our island home
> Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam.'
>
> How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
> With half-shut eyes ever to seem

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Falling asleep in a half dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,[1]
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush[2] on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping[3] ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;[4]
To muse, and brood, and live again in memory,
With those old faces[5] of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,[6]
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass![7]

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change:
For surely now our household hearths are cold:[8]
Our sons inherit us:[9] our looks are strange:
And we should come, like ghosts, to trouble joy.[10]
But, propt on beds of amaranth[11] and moly,[12]
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long, bright river, drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes[13] calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twinèd vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd[14] water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath[15] divine!
Only to hear[16] and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal[17] mind,
In the hollow[18] Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind.[19]

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NOTES AND MEANINGS.

PAGE

5. 1. **Fabulous,** like a fable; not real or true; imaginary. [translation.
2. **At first hand,** directly; not in a
3. **Literature,** all written and printed productions of the human mind, including books, newspapers, and magazines.
4. **Myths.** A *myth* is a traditional story which appears to be based on historical facts, but is not so. A *legend* may have some slight basis of fact.

6. 1. **Parables.** A parable is a brief narrative or descriptive story, representing some scene or event such as might occur; it teaches a moral or religious lesson.
2. **Corrupt additions,** additions which are full of errors or mistakes.
3. **Homer.** The greatest of the Greek poets. He is supposed to have lived about 850 years B.C., and the two great poems which he is said to have written are the *Iliad*, which tells of the ten years' siege of *Ilium* or *Troy*, under Ag-a-mem'-non, King of My-ce'-næ, to redress the injury done to Men-e-la'-us, King of Sparta, in the carrying off of his wife Helen by Paris; and the *Odyssey*, which tells of the adventures of U-lys'-ses during ten years of wandering in endeavouring to return to his native land after the city was taken. [Some learned men think Homer lived about 1200 B.C.]
4. **Ambrosia,** the name given to the food of the gods, which is said to have made them immortal.
5. **Nectar,** the name given to the drink of the gods, like red wine; it was poured out into a golden cup by He'-be.
6. **Persians.** Persia was a great empire which, in the reign of Da-ri'-us, the third king, extended as far as the river Indus in Asia, and northward from the Persian Gulf to the border of what is now Siberia.
7. **Colonies.** A colony is a company or body of people who leave their native country or homes, to settle in, and inhabit and cultivate, a new province, country, or district. Among the Greeks a colony

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was usually an independent State, and only united to the Mother-Country by ties of sentiment and religion. It differed from the Roman Colony, which was really a part of the Roman Empire, and generally military in its origin. The self-governing Colonies of the British Empire are most like Greek Colonies, but they are not so entirely independent.

7. 1. **Attica** was one of the great Divisions of Ancient Greece. Athens was its capital.
2. **Sparta.** In the 6th century B.C. this was the chief of the Greek States, and took a leading part in the war against the Persians. It was situated in that part of the peninsula which we now call the Morea. The town of Sparta (now a very small place) was situated 20 miles from the sea on the river Eu-ro'-tas, which runs into the sea, east of Cape Matapan.

8. 1. **Augustus.** Caius Octavius Cæsar, born B.C. 63, died A.D. 14. He was afterwards known as Augustus Cæsar, and was the heir of Julius Cæsar. His generals enabled him to become master of the whole Roman world.
2. **The Arts.** By this term is generally meant Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, but amongst the Romans it included several branches of learning, such as Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy.
3. **Seasons.** *See Note* 4 *to page* 68, *on page* 93.
4. **Deities.** By a deity is here meant one of the gods or goddesses worshipped by the Greeks and Romans, and is altogether different from *the* Deity, *i.e.*, God, the Supreme Being.

9. 1. **Keats.** John Keats, born at London, 1795, died at Rome, 1821, was a famous English poet. He studied for a surgeon, but never practised. He lived in Italy the latter part of his life. The extract is from *En-dym'-i-on.* Keats speaks of *four* goddesses, but the Greeks only recognized *three.* *See Note* 4, *to p.* 68, *on p.* 93.

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9. 2. **Jupiter.** The name, which is Latin, means "Father Jove." [sower."
3. **Saturn.** The name means "the
4. **Kronos.** The name means "time."
5. **Titans,** a race of powerful deities supposed to represent the various forces of Nature. There were originally six of them.
6. **Chaos.** Chaos is from a Greek word meaning "a yawning chasm."
7. **Homer.** This extract is from Alexander Pope's Translation of the *Iliad*, Book I., verse 684. Pope was a famous English poet (1688—1744).
8. **Thunderer.** This was one of the titles of Jove, who was said to hurl his thunder-bolts and destroy those who displeased him. The Romans represented him as seated on a throne of ivory, holding in his right hand a sheaf of thunderbolts, in his left hand a sceptre, and having an eagle standing beside him.
9. **Sable,** dark and frowning.
10. **Ambrosial curls.** "Ambrosial" here means beautiful.
11. **Latin poet.** This was Cai'-us Va-le'-ri-us Flac'-cus, a Roman poet, who lived in the first century A.D.

10. 1. **Ares.** The name means "strife."
2. **Aphrodite.** The name is said to mean "born of the foam of the sea."
3. **Mysterious birth.** This extract is from a poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley, the friend of Keats. He was a famous English poet, born 1792, drowned off the coast of Italy, 1822.
4. **Phœbus Apollo.** Phœbus means "the shining one," and Apollo "destroying." He had not only life and life-giving influence, but he had deadly power, as of the sun when hottest.
5. **Diana.** This is the name used by the Romans. The Greeks called the same goddess Ar'-te-mis.
6. **Pike.** Albert Pike (1809—1891), an American lawyer, and an important volunteer during the Civil War. It is from his *Prose, Sketches, and Poems.*

11. 1. **Ben Jonson** (1573—1637), a noted English dramatist and actor, and the friend of Shakespeare. In addition to a large number of *Plays*, he wrote many *Poems*, some of which are very noted.
2. **Silver chair,** the clouds.

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11. 3. **Hesperus.** The planet Venus when she is an evening star is called Hes'-per-us. Here, however, the name is poetically used for the "evening."
4. **Cynthia.** This is another of the names of Artemis or Diana, the "moon goddess," derived from Mount Cynthus, her birthplace.
5. **Orb,** circle.
6. **Wishèd.** Wished for, or longed for.

12. 1. **Athene.** This is the Greek name. The Romans called her Min-er'-va.
2. **Caduceus.** Originally this was the name of a herald's staff of olive wood. It is one of the special symbols of Mercury.
3. **Lyre,** a kind of harp. It was the symbol of Apollo, and "lyric verse" is so called, because the lyre was used to accompany the words when sung.

13. 1. **Edmund Spenser** (1552—1599), a famous English poet. The *Faërie Queene* was written between 1590 and 1596, but was never completed. The "faërie" was Queen Elizabeth, and Spenser's idea was to portray brave knights and all those high qualities which distinguish them.
2. **Sweet semblance,** pleasing outward appearance.
3. **Ourselves demean,** behave ourselves.
4. **Skill,** ability to do all these things.
5. **Lord Macaulay.** Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800—1859), one of the most noted of our English historians, essayists, and statesmen. The extract is from *Lays of Ancient Rome—Horatius.*

14. 1. **Presiding,** that which directs, controls, regulates, and watches over.
2. **Nymphs.** This word originally meant "a young woman." There were three classes of nymphs—Water Nymphs, Mountain Nymphs, and Tree or Wood Nymphs. The nymphs resembled more the fairies of modern times than any of the personages mentioned in Greek and Roman mythology.

15. 1. **Livy** (59 B.C.—17 A.D.), the greatest of Roman historians. From his *History of Rome* we get most of our knowledge of the Roman people.

17. 1. **Elis,** sometimes called E-le'-is.
2. **Zante,** one of the Ionian Islands off the west coast of the Morea.
3. **Quoit.** The game of quoits was very

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popular with both the Greeks and Romans; but the quoit, instead of being a ring of metal as it is to-day, was a circular plate of stone or metal.

17. 4. **Javelin.** The javelin was a short spear, and the Roman soldiers were very expert in the use of this weapon.
5. **Accrued,** followed as a consequence.

18. 1. **Seven different places** all claim Homer as having been born there, *viz.*, Smyr'-na, Col'-o-phon, and Rhodes (all in Asia Minor), Sal'-a-mis (in Cyprus), Chi'-os (on a large island of the same name in the Archipelago), Ar'-gos (in the centre of what is now the Morea), and Athens. Smyrna has the best claim.
2. **Troy.** Troy was afterwards called Il'-i-um. Its ruins are probably those found at a place now called His'-sar-lik, about 100 miles north-by-west of Smyrna, in Asia Minor, or about two miles to the south of the entrance to the Dar-da-nelles' (between Turkey and Asia Minor.)
3. **Vergil** (70 B.C.—19 B.C.). The name of this famous Roman poet is sometimes spelt Virgil.
4. **Ovid** (43 B.C.—18 A.D.). This Roman poet was one of the greatest writers of the period in which he lived, and one of his chief works is *The Met-a-mor'-pho-ses*, in which he tells a very large number of the wonderful old tales of the Greeks and Romans.

19. 1. **William Wordsworth** (1770—1850), one of the greatest of our English poets. He became Poet Laureate in 1843, and on his death was succeeded by Alfred (Lord) Tennyson.
2. **Beardless youth,** Apollo.
3. **Ravishment,** great delight.
4. **Beaming goddess.** On the earth Diana; in the heavens Luna, or the Moon, attended by her train of huntresses, nymphs of the woods and springs. When the chase was ended, she and her maidens assembled in shady groves, or on the banks of a stream, and either sang or danced, making the hills resound with their joyous shouts. The nymphs also here represent the stars.

20. 1. **O'-re-ads.** The O-re'-a-des, the Mountain nymphs, the constant companions of Diana.

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20. 2. **Zephyrs.** Zeph'-y-rus was one of the deities of the woods, in whose charge was the west wind.
3. **Depending,** hanging down.
4. **Gamesome,** frolicsome; full of fun.

21. 1. **Alc-me'-ne** was a mortal, not one of the goddesses.
2. **Thebes.** Now called Thiva; it lies about 30 miles north-west of Athens.

24. 1. **Gymnastics.** By this word the Greeks meant all athletic exercises which served to strengthen the body.

28. 1. **Argives.** These people dwelt in Argos, a district in the southern part of Greece.

29. 1. **Reverberating,** echoing again and again.

30. 1. **Flayed,** took off the skin.

31. 1. **Immortal,** not liable to death.

33. 1. **Inhospitable,** not kindly disposed to strangers, guests, or visitors.

34 1. **Calcined,** burnt.

35. 1. **Mount Palatinus.** One of the seven hills upon which Rome was built. It is said that here the city was founded by Romulus. The Colosseum is built at the foot of Mt. Palatinus on the north-east.

37. 1. **Harpies.** Amongst the Greeks these were wingèd monsters, having the face and body of a woman, the wings of a bird of prey, and the feet and fingers armed with sharp claws. They were filthy creatures.
2. **Vulcan.** Amongst the Romans this was the god of Fire, and of all those who worked in metals. He was the son of Jupiter and Juno, and was deformed in his feet, which is said to have been caused by Jupiter hurling him, in a fit of anger, down from the clouds. Mount Etna was said to be one of his workshops.

39. 1. **Peloponnesus.** That part of Greece which we now call the Morea.
2. **Theseus.** One of the chief heroes of Greek legend, but not a god. When he grew up to manhood, he performed many wonderful acts and noted deeds.

42. 1. **Remains to this day.** The massive wall here referred to was built round the ancient city of Troy.
2. **Pestilence,** some such plague as cholera, fever, etc., from which people died in great numbers.

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44. 1. **Libya,** a large district of Africa to the west of Egypt.
2. **Pillars of Hercules.** The two promontories, one on each side of the Straits of Gibraltar, *viz.*, the Rock of Gibraltar and Ab'-y-la, near Ceu'-ta in Africa. The modern name of Abyla is *Jebel Musa* or "Ape's Hill."

46. 1. **Aventine Hill.** Mount Aventine, one of the seven hills upon which Rome was built, was to the south-west of Palatinus.

48. 1. **Cupidity,** covetousness; great greed.

49. 1. **Cast,** in wrestling, thrown on the ground.
2. **Fillet,** a narrow band to tie up the hair.

52. 1. **Charon.** The ancient Greeks believed that Charon carried the souls of the dead (whose bodies had been buried) over the rivers to the Under-world. His fee for doing this was an ob'-o-lus, a small silver coin worth about three half-pence; this coin was placed for him in the mouth of the dead person previous to burial.

53. 1. **Mercury.** The messenger of the gods, and a god himself.

54. 1. **Invulnerable armour,** armour which rendered him incapable of being wounded.

56. 1. **Ruse,** a scheme, plan, or trick to deceive.
2. **Tripod,** a kind of stool supported on [three legs.

57. 1. **Lydia,** a country occupying the western part of Asia Minor. The modern city of Smyrna is its present capital.
2. **Degradation,** something which caused him to feel shame at his position.

59. 1. **Tunic.** Amongst the ancient Greeks a loose, outer garment worn by both sexes, sometimes with, and sometimes without, sleeves, reaching to the knees, and held in at the waist by a belt. Amongst the Romans it was a kind of shirt.

60. 1. **Pyre,** a heap of wood, etc., upon which the dead are burned.

61. 1. **Colonies.** *See Note* 7 *to page* 6, *on page* 90.
2. **Endowed him,** provided or furnished [him.

63. 1. **Fates.** These were three sisters who sat near Pluto's throne. The youngest one, Clo'-tho, spun the thread of life in which were mingled bright and dark lines. The second one, Lach'-e-sis, twisted the thread under her fingers, so that it was now strong and now weak.

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The third one, At'-ro-pos, was armed with a huge pair of shears with which she cut short the thread of life.

63. 2. **Plaintive,** full of sorrow and sadness; mournful.

64. 1. **Petals,** the leaves of the corolla of a [flower.
2. **Shades.** "Shade" is the name which the Romans gave to the soul after it was separated from the body. They supposed that it could be seen but not touched.
3. **Portals,** entrance gates.

65. 1. **Stipulation,** condition.

66. 1. **Admonition,** warning.
2. **Hope springs, etc.** From *An Essay on Man*, Epistle I., line 95, by Alexander Pope (1688—1744), one of our greatest poets.

67. 1. **Disconsolately,** full of sadness.
2. **Milton.** John Milton (1608—1674), next to Shakespeare, the greatest English poet. The extract is from *L'Allegro.*

68. 1. **Lyra.** This is one of the Northern Constellations, and contains the beautiful star *Alpha Lyræ* or *Vega.* In order to distinguish the stars more readily, the ancients divided all of them into groups, surrounding each group by an imaginary line which they fancied to represent some animal or object whose name gave the name to the group.
2. **Happy Fields,** called by the Greeks the E-lys'-i-an Fields, the abode of the blessèd after death, hence, Paradise.
3. **Cyprus,** a large island in the Mediterranean, off the coast of Asia Minor. It was of great importance in early times.
4. **The Seasons.** It seems curious that only *three* nymphs are mentioned as presiding over the Seasons; but the ancient Greeks recognized only Spring, Summer, and Autumn as seasons; all Nature (they said) was wrapped in a deep slumber during the cheerless months called Winter, and therefore no presiding deity was required.

69. 1. **Gait,** manner of walking.
2. **Psyché.** The ancient Greeks often represented Psyche as a fair, young girl with the wings of a butterfly.
3. **Homage,** respect and deference.

70. 1. **Amber,** a valuable fossil resin, of a pale, yellow colour.

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72. 1. **Alcove.** In this case the word means a small room opening into a larger one.
2. **Nectar,** the name given to the *drink* of the gods; it made them immortal.

74. 1. **Insidious,** deceptive and treacherous.

75. 1. **Cypress tree,** an evergreen tree of the pine family. Its fine leaves are of a sombre colour. The Greeks and Romans used to put sprigs of it in the coffins of the dead as a sign of mourning.

77. 1. **Lentil,** a plant of the pea family growing in the East. The seeds are used as food.
2. **Inextricable,** so mixed up as to make it impossible to separate them.

78. 1. **Pluto.** Amongst the Romans he was the god of the Lower Regions, the Under-world, or Ha'-des. He is usually represented as an old man, carrying in his hand a long, two-pronged fork.

79. 1. **Ambrosia.** *See Note, on page* 90.

82. 1. **Populace,** the people, who had crowded to the race-course.

83. 1. **Cybele.** This was one of the names of Rhea, the wife of Chronos, and the "Great Mother of the Gods."
2. **Walter Savage Landor,** a noted English poet and essayist (1775—1864). The extract is from a poem entitled *Hippomenes and Atalanta.*
3. **Maple goal,** a post of maple wood was the goal; it had to be touched with the winner's hand.
4. **Pronely forth,** bending forward, to endeavour to touch the goal.
6. **Mute despair,** silent, and her face showing hopeless defeat.

84. 1. **Ulysses,** is the Latin form of this name; the Greek form is Odysseus.
2. **Ionian Islands.** Ithaca is a small island between the island we now call Cephalonia and the mainland.

86. 1. **Gird up our loins,** prepare for work. Eastern people gather up their long, outer garment round the waist and secure it there with a girdle or belt, so that the flowing garment may not impede them.
2. **Languid sensation,** a feeling of half-sleepy idleness.
3. **Odyssey.** The extract is from Book XI., as translated (1871) by William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878), a noted United States journalist.

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88. 1. **Tennyson.** Alfred (Lord) Tennyson (1809-1892). The *Lotos-Eaters* is one of Tennyson's shorter descriptive poems, and is full of beautiful language.
2. **Wandering fields of barren foam.** The rippling waves are compared to a field, and contrasted with the fields on the land covered with fruitful crops.

89. 1. **Amber light,** the golden sunset.
2. **Leave the myrrh-bush,** the sun seems loath to leave the spiny shrubs that produce the fragrant myrrh.
3. **Crisping,** curling.
4. **Mild-minded melancholy,** quiet thoughtfulness.
5. **Old faces,** familiar faces of long ago.
6. **Mound of grass,** *i.e.*, over the grave.
7. **Urn of brass.** When bodies were burnt (cremated) the ashes were kept in a vase. Homer mentions golden vases for the ashes of rich people.
8. **Hearths are cold.** They had been so long away that the memory of them was forgotten, and there would be no warm welcome for them when they returned. The siege and return lasted 20 years.
9. **Inherit us,** *i.e.*, we have been looked upon as dead, and our sons have inherited our property.
10. **Trouble joy,** *i.e.*, if we resumed our place at home now, we should break up their present happy family life.
11. **Amaranth,** an imaginary and beautiful flower which was said never to fade.
12. **Moly,** a fabulous plant, having black roots, milk-white flowers, and magical properties.
13. **Dewy echoes,** echoes heard in the dewy evening.
14. **Emerald colour'd,** green, from the reflected colour of the foliage.
15. **Acanthus-wreath,** thick growths of acanthus plants. The acanthus is a prickly plant with large, beautiful leaves somewhat like those of the carrot.
16. **Only to hear,** only to listen to the sleepy murmurs of the sea, not to go to it and again take ship.
17. **Equal,** unchanging.
18. **Hollow,** full of valleys.
19. **Careless of mankind,** without any thought of friends or the future.